

Wimbledon

Friday March 22 1996

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The latest arts, books and culture

Review

Spain's main man



Does censorship make sense?

Music: Reviving Motown

Flamenco star Joaquin Cortes

Plus: technology rules ok?

Anger at failure to remove mad cows from food chain Fear of huge death toll French lead boycott

The crisis ministers ignored



To the slaughter... As fury mounts at the government's handling of the BSE affair, a number of European countries last night banned British beef

PHOTOGRAPH: LUCA ZAMPEDRI

Experts accuse Government of failing the public

Owen Bowcott, Patrick Wintour and Christopher Elliott

MINISTERS ignored scientific advice about the dangers of BSE, delayed introducing safe practices and failed to remove potentially infected material from the food chain, it was alleged last night.

Government's management of the long-running crisis came under increasingly bitter attack from both research scientists and opposition politicians.

outbreak, warned that casualty figures might rise significantly. Mike Painter, a consultant in communicable disease control for Manchester, said that the number of deaths from the disease could eventually be between 10 and 100,000, though it was still too early to say whether there would be a "big epidemic".



yet initial control procedures to protect public health did not appear until November 1989.

Failure to regulate the food rendering industry, which processes offal and animal parts, was the cause of BSE, he said, referring specifically to the use of chemical solvents in the process.

how best to produce a high quality product. But a ministry spokesman last night insisted there had been "no regulatory changes" covering such processes in the 1980s.

Gun amnesty goes ahead

Alan Travis and Rebecca Smithers

NATIONAL firearms amnesty is to be held in the wake of the Dunblane massacre, the Prime Minister announced yesterday.

gun laws which would allow guns to be kept at home but their firing mechanisms to be removed and lodged at the police station to frustrate burglars.

tion of accepting unlicensed weapons, whose possession is a criminal offence.

Richard Thomas and Sally Weale

THERE was a time when the cost of living in modern-day Britain was measured by the price of a good honest pint of mild in the local boozery, and a fish supper to follow.

that nice piece of frozen plaice. In their place in the CSO's new-look shopping basket come kilograms of shiny green peppers and Jane Fonda-inspired aerobic classes; the children's private school fees; and, curiously, flower vases.

in." But Clare Short, Labour MP for Birmingham Ladywood, was far from satisfied. Sounding distinctly Old Labour, she said: "The Government are living in a different world to replace a fish supper and a pint of mild with private education."

Inside

The two pilots of an RAF Chinook which crashed with the loss of 29 lives are not to blame for the disaster, an inquiry reports today

Britain The two pilots of an RAF Chinook which crashed with the loss of 29 lives are not to blame for the disaster, an inquiry reports today

World News The University of California has been operating a backdoor admissions system for the under-qualified children of the rich

City Prices of likely best-selling books have been increased to allow retailers to offer discounts without hitting profit margins

Sport Ray Illingworth's challenger has played the Botham card in the battle to be England's chairman of selectors

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Import bans spread

Paul Brown and Patrick Wintour

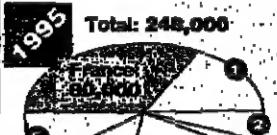
THE future of the British beef industry was in jeopardy last night as France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden halted imports, Germany demanded a Europe-wide ban and 10,000 British schools took beef off the menu.

Beef exports

UK beef exports in tonnes



9,000 Netherlands
4,000 Italy
1,000 Spain
18,000 Other EU
3,000 South Africa
14,000 Other non-EU



42,000 Italy
17,000 Netherlands
17,000 Spain
45,000 Other EU
27,000 South Africa
28,000 Other non-EU

larly susceptible. Ministers have already said that if the answer from the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) is "yes", they will accept it as binding. Thousands of jobs rest on the result, in farming, food processing and fast food restaurants where beefburgers were until this week still the best sellers.

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Sketch

Everyone invited to the party



Simon Hoggart

FACED with the job of choosing between innumerable different forms of election for Northern Ireland, each passionately favoured by one party or another, the Government has got round the problem by electing everybody. Not quite everybody, of course, but almost anyone who would like to be elected can be. The deal seems to be that roughly half the people will take part in the forum, so the other half will be hired to stop them killing each other. The 110 people in the new forum will represent the population of Northern Ireland, which is 1.1 million. It's as if the House of Commons were to have 4,448 members. (Not such a bad idea; at least they might fill the place now and again.) The Prime Minister explained the system. Every constituency will have five members. But there will be an extra clutch of seats for the other, minor parties - giving places to cranks and fringe groups such as Screaming Lord Sutch, the Conservative Party and so forth. The plan was accepted by most MPs, if somewhat grudgingly. Mr Ashdown said it was "a dog's breakfast on offer, and it may be the best dog's breakfast available." (Admiring his glossy coat and shiny nose, I have sometimes suspected that Mr Ashdown eats a vitamin-enriched dog's breakfast every morning.) Mr Blair sort of welcomed the plan, adding: "Nothing should stand in the way of peace. I am quite certain that is the view of the people of Northern Ireland." This is the boilerplate language politicians feel obliged to use about Ulster, rather than the wryly that the Queen Mum was always described on television as "radiant", even

if she looked as if she'd spent the night in a shop doorway. If the people of Northern Ireland really thought nothing should stand in the way of peace, they would vote for the Alliance, the only party committed to peace rather than victory. In fact, the Alliance will get around 10 per cent, which has always been the total vote for moderation in Northern Ireland. Oddly enough, the SDLP view was not presented by the Blessed John Hume, but by his side-kick, Seamus Mallon (Newry). While Mr Hume sits on the bench being saintly, Mr Mallon gets on with being very, very cross. The new forum had no support in the nationalist community, he said. It was a Unionist-inspired, Unionist-dominated prototype of their preferred structure, even before negotiations began. "Will you accept there is no broad support in the nationalist community for this elective process? It is divisive and nonsensical, the Monster Raving Loony Election Proposal!" Messrs Mallon and Hume come from the misty border lands, where most of the population feels far more Irish than British. They mistrust elections because all they prove is one uncomfortable fact - that there are an awful lot of Unionists to the north and the east. Of course, if there weren't, there wouldn't be a problem. But the Irish problem is a set of interlocking vicious circles. Mr Major told Mr Mallon that he had "done himself no credit" if you can always tell when the Prime Minister is rattled, because, rather than answering the question, he accuses the other side of moral turpitude. Dennis Skinner said that the whole deal had been patched up to buy votes for the Government to keep them in office. Mr Major denied this, and I suspect he was telling the truth. The trouble is that nobody really believes anything this Government says any more. There was a time when, if a minister in a dark suit and a bowler hat told you it was safe to eat beef, you would believe him. Now you treat him like a double-glazing salesman who promises the aluminium frames won't buckle.

Poll proposals called loony and a dog's breakfast but ministers are confident of riding out boycott risk

Ulster plan runs into flak

Patrick Wintour and David Sharrock

JOHN Major yesterday came under fire from every major Northern Ireland party following publication of byzantine compromise proposals for elections. The nationalist SDLP claimed he had created "a monster raving loony electoral proposal". Seamus Mallon, the SDLP deputy leader, said the proposals, which are designed to reopen the path to all-party talks, were divisive, nonsensical and a sop to Unionists, as well as a diversion from the real task of all-party talks. The Sinn Fein president, Gerry Adams, said Mr Major had bowed to a Unionist agenda, while the party's chief negotiator, Martin

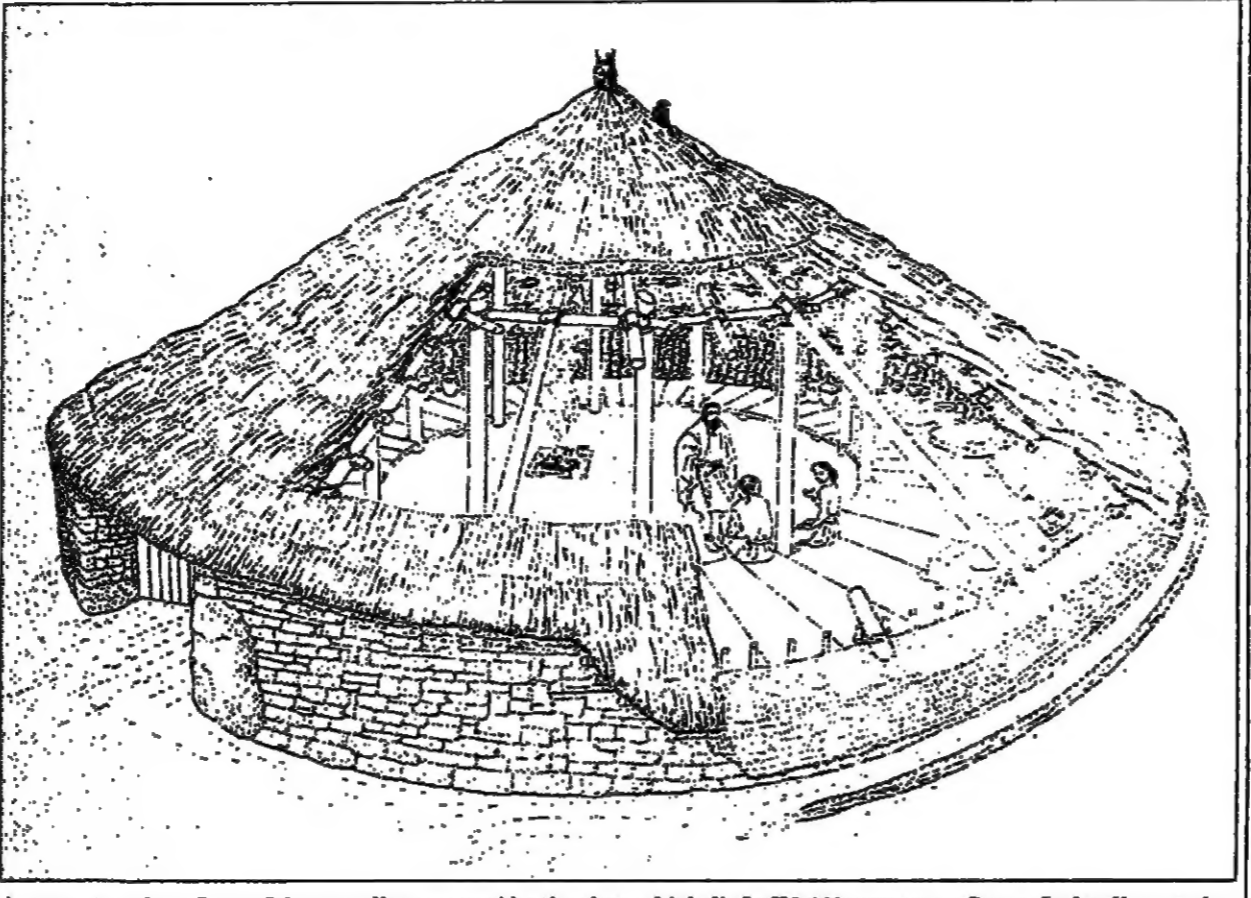
McGuinness, said the election was "complete anathema" to nationalists. However, Northern Ireland ministers are privately confident that the political parties will not boycott the elections, which have been crafted to ensure that all parties, including those linked to the Protestant paramilitaries, are represented. The elections, to an 110-member forum, will be held on May 30. Eighteen constituencies will each elect five members. The electorate will vote for a party rather than individuals, and constituency seats will later be allocated proportionately. The remaining 30 seats to the forum will be allocated to the top 10 political parties, measured by the aggregate vote across the province. Each party will be allocated proportionately. The forum, which

The main points

- Legislation for elections to 110 strong forum introduced at Easter
Elections in 18 constituencies with voters putting one mark on ballot paper; seats distributed on list proportionally according to votes for parties within constituency. Extra 20 seats for top 10 parties, ensuring Unionist paramilitary involvement.
Government unconvinced by call for referendum.
Forum to meet alongside all-party talks.
Negotiators to all-party talks to be drawn from forum on equal numbers per party basis.
Negotiators must commit themselves to Mitchell principles.
IRA must reinstate ceasefire for Sinn Fein to be involved.

number of seats. The talks are due to start on June 10. Mr Major insisted that the system would not appear complex to voters since the ballot paper will require them to cast only one vote. Sinn Fein will be free to stand for the elections without an IRA ceasefire, but an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire of August 1994 will be required before they can take part in all-party talks. Mr Major reached his solution on the electoral system after he was unable to broker an agreement between Ulster Unionist support for elections on a constituency basis and SDLP-Democratic Unionist backing for all-province elections. Ministers have rejected the SDLP proposals for a referendum north and south of the border, partly because they fear it will not achieve its

purpose of marginalising Sinn Fein. The Labour leader, Tony Blair, yesterday said that the electoral system was not ideal, but nor was the political situation. The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, said that the system was "a dog's breakfast, but the best dog's breakfast available". Peter Robinson, Democratic Unionist deputy leader, said of Mr Major: "Having set himself the goal of finding an electoral system that is most broadly acceptable, he has found the system that is least broadly acceptable". Irish government officials noted that while there had been much criticism of the plan, no party had actually committed itself to boycotting the election. Leader comment, page 8



A reconstruction of one of the roundhouses used by the clan, which died off 3,000 years ago after an Icelandic eruption

Modern peril seen in ashes of lost clan

John Ezzard

DISCOVERY of the remains of one of the lost clans of Scotland provided a new text for doomsayers yesterday. The habit in which they had flourished for millennia was destroyed within a few months - by acid rain. That was 3,000 years ago. The acid came from a periodic eruption by an Icelandic volcano. But at least the clan had time to get away. We may not be so lucky after the next eruption - which is overdue, according to a volcanologist. The finding of the big abandoned settlement, by archaeologists excavating a future Highlands road realignment, led to grim predictions that Europe-wide havoc could be caused in a 1995-style summer by carbon dioxide from Mount Katla in south-east Iceland. One of Britain's leading



Archaeologist Alan Duffy pieces together a clan burial urn. The last volcanic sulphur cloud to reach Britain came when the Laki fissure, near Mount Katla, erupted in 1783, casting a hot, dry, suffocating and crop-bleighting fog as far as Naples. The smell of sulphur was so strong that Christians feared hell had arrived on Earth. The writer and politician Horace Walpole spoke of "a constant mist that gives no dew but might as well be smoke". The poet Thomas Cowper wrote: "The sun sets with the face of a hot salamander and rises with the same complexion." Recently Dr Gribben, of the Institute of Earth Sciences at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth, published a research paper which found that these volcanic emissions were concentrated by a zone of stable high pressure over Europe between late June and July, 1783. The pattern was similar to the persistent high pressure which caused last summer's long heatwave. "The paper concludes: 'The coincidence of a summer like 1995 with a large (ish) Italian or Icelandic volcanic eruption will have severe consequences for human health in urban environments.'" Dr Gribben added yesterday: "If the results are as severe as the Laki fissure outpouring in 1783, crops will be ruined, fish will die in the rivers, a thick toxic fog will drift over the country and asthma sufferers all over Europe will be in danger."

Fears grow of renewed war in the Balkans

Martin Walker in Washington and Ian Black in London

THE United States and British governments warned yesterday of an explosion of renewed conflict in the Balkans by the year's end unless urgent action is taken to shore up the battered Dayton peace accord. The grim predictions came amid signs that officials in Europe and the US are again preparing to blame each other if - as they fear - the Bosnian ceasefire collapses. "The overall strategic political goals of the former warring factions [in the Balkans] have not fundamentally changed," Lieutenant-General Patrick Hughes, director of the Defence Intelligence Agency, told the US senate intelligence committee in a report written last month and declassified yesterday. "Without a concerted effort by the international community, including substantial progress on the civil sector to restore economic viability to provide for conditions in which national political stability can be achieved, the prospects for the existence of a viable, unitary Bosnia beyond the life of I-For [the Nato implementation force] are dim." White House fears of a new eruption during the US presidential election have been fuelled by the failure of Islamic nations to provide funds to train and equip Bosnia's armed forces, and by European reluctance to keep troops there if US forces pull out as planned in the autumn. British officials are also gloomy, warning that after the Serb exodus from Sarajevo hopes for reconciliation are gone, and that prospects for elections, a key element of the Dayton process, are poor.

On both sides, the media is still dominated by the ruling parties, making it hard to envisage the "free and fair elections" due to be supervised by the Organisation for Co-operation and Security in Europe. With foreign ministers from the five-nation Contact Group meeting their counterparts from Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia in Moscow tomorrow, concern is mounting sharply in both Washington and London about the future. Foreign Office sources say the Muslim-Croat federation is dangerously fragile, and the absence of a "peace dividend" for rump Yugoslavia is pushing Serbia's president, Slobodan Milosevic, eastwards to engage with Russia and China rather than the West. Carl Bildt, the co-ordinator of the civilian implementation effort, has already asked Nato for help in providing security for the elections - expected in September. This means that original plans to start withdrawing the 60,000-strong force in June would have to be shelved and increases the chances of the departure date being delayed. The White House fears any new threat of international disruption to President Bill Clinton's re-election campaign, after setbacks to his peacemaking claims in Northern Ireland and Israel. Dayton is the prime exhibit in his diplomatic showcase. Ed Vulliamy adds from Vukovar: Madeleine Albright, the US ambassador to the United Nations, came under a light hail of stones and a barrage of insults hurled by a Serb mob as she toured Vukovar in eastern Croatia yesterday. The ambush cut short her walkabout, with nervous security officers insisting she leave. Nato chief fails to sway Russia, page 8

Beef ban spreads over Europe

continued from page 1 taken to the European Court of Justice. Mr Hogg said: "The ban is unnecessary, worrying, wrong in principle." The Commission overturned a previous German ban but the issue is unlikely to be resolved so simply this time. The Scientific Veterinary Committee hears evidence today from two of Britain's experts on BSE, one of whom, Ray Bradley, chairs the committee. The second is Richard Kimberlin, a consultant on scrapie, the sheep disease which spread to cattle as BSE. The committee can advise a ban and so reinforce the unilateral action.

The French announcement prompted Markis & Spencer, which has 16 branches across France, to withdraw all British beef from its shelves. A company spokeswoman indicated that deliveries in transit would be turned away. In advance of the weekend meeting of Seac and another Commons statement on BSE on Monday, John Major refused to make a categorical statement that it was safe to feed beef to children. Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, refused to say that he would ask his children to eat beef.

Review

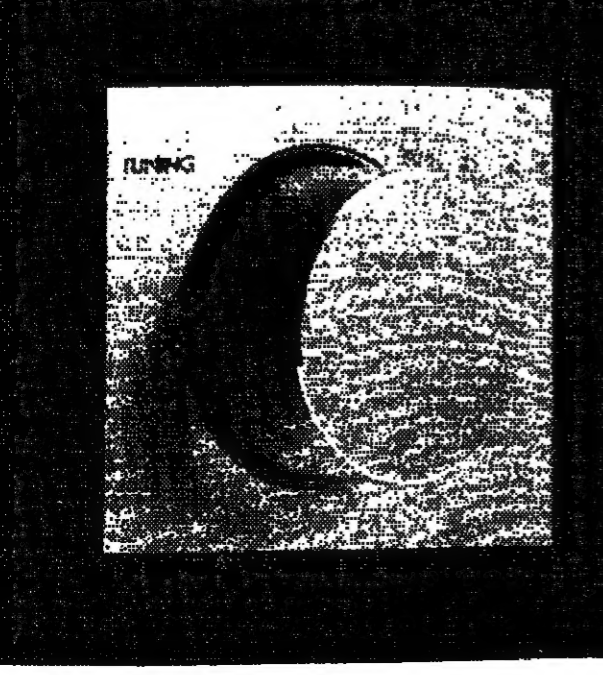
O'Brien horribly on the rocks

Lyn Gardner

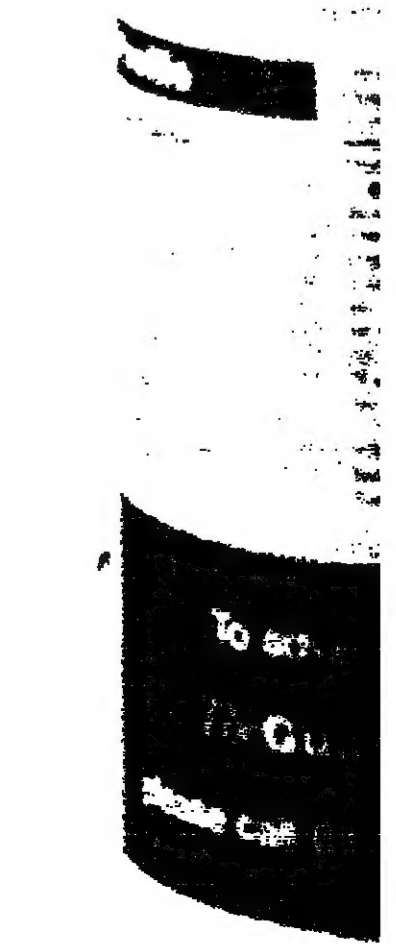
Disgracefully Yours Comedy Theatre

HELL is a groovy and happening place - welcome to a hell of a party, announces Richard O'Brien - creator of cult hits The Rocky Horror Show and The Crystal Maze, at the start of Disgracefully Yours, a rock 'n' roll musical that looks pretty shaky all over. Hell, suggested Jean-Paul Sartre, is other people. How true. In particular, hell is 90 minutes of eternity in the presence of O'Brien as he struts about the stage like an ageing rock star (no sympathy for this devil) sporting a couple of perfectly darling little horns on his forehead and a pair of cloven hooves. The hooves are wiggles, but then the camp spirit of the '70s and the ghost of Frank Nfurther hovers like a sad reprover over this silly, smutty evening. O'Brien not only stars as Mephistopheles Smith, a demon evangelist for a vastly improved hell, he is also responsible for the songs, the lyrics and the book. What book? Well may you ask. It seems to have disappeared in a whiff of

sulphur. Despite the presence of the band, known as the Black Angels, and three backing singers and dancers, dubbed Brother Michael and the Fabulous Frockettes, this is essentially a one-man show in which the slightly menacing, whacky persona of O'Brien is interchangeable with that of Mephistopheles Smith. There are some more than halfway decent lines - "God is not only for Christians"; "You give good hedonism"; "But O'Brien lacks the timing of the very best stand-ups. Of course, the whole evening is only meant to be taken as a bit of fun, and there were people in the audience determined to have a ball. But it is a show that is essentially lazy and self-reverential, one that doesn't move O'Brien forward but has him constantly harking back to his heyday and The Rocky Horror Show, when putting men in fishnet tights was more than just a fashion statement. In the programme, the CV of one of the dancers, Debbie Scamp, has a marvellous misprint. It announces how delighted she is to be appearing in Disgracefully Yours. This review appeared in later editions yesterday.

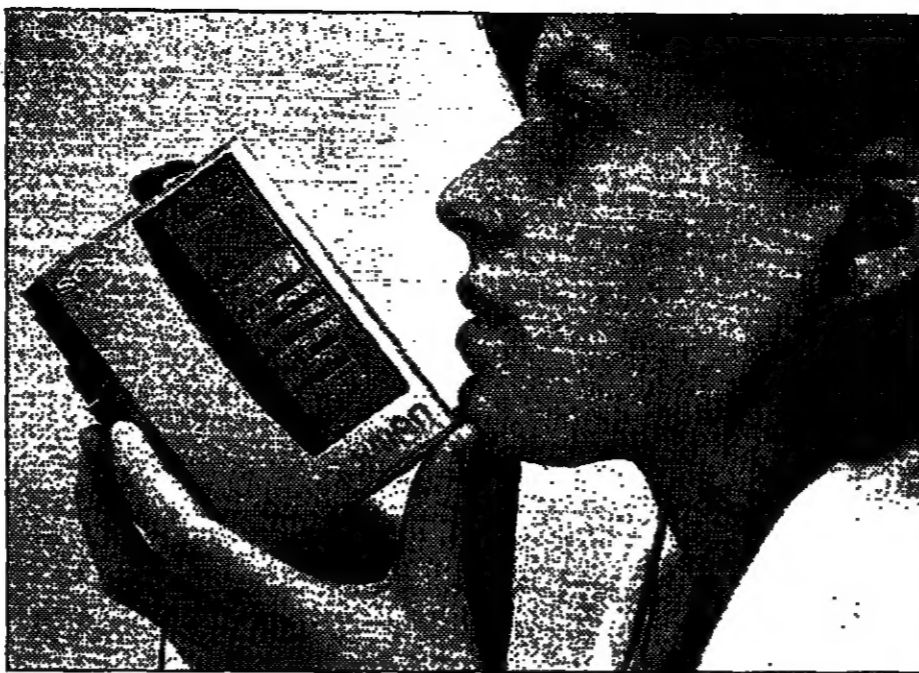


79% of adults tune to Commercial Radio. Over a four week period, 37.1 million people listen to Commercial Radio. That's a staggering 79% of all UK adults just waiting to hear your message. Commercial Radio. Its time has come. SOURCE: BARB Q3 1995 (ADULTS 16+)



flak

Question: When is a portable stereo listening device the same as a Sony Walkman?
Answer: Never.
 Yesterday three appeal court judges delivered their verdict on this weighty matter — at a cost of £500,000 to the British taxpayer. Now the battle goes on in the US courts



Vivek Chaudhary on the failure of a German inventor's legal challenge

Walkman claim rejected

THREE judges yesterday criticised the huge cost of a maverick German's quest to prove he invented the Walkman, which ended in defeat in the Appeal Court.

Andreas Pavel lost his bid to sue Sony, claiming that he came up with the idea of the Walkman two years before it was launched by the Japanese multi-national.

The ruling will cost the British taxpayer £500,000 after the judges ordered Mr Pavel to pay the legal costs of Sony and Toshiba, the other company he was suing.

Mr Pavel, aged 51, was granted legal aid to pursue his case and the money for costs will come out of the legal aid fund.

Mr Pavel had hoped to claim up to £100 million in royalties from Sony and Toshiba for sales in Britain alone, if he had won his appeal. The court heard that he took out a patent in 1977, two years before the Sony Walkman was launched, for a "portable stereo listening device" to be worn on a belt, and had invented the idea of a Walkman while on holiday.

Around 150 million Walkmans have been sold, generating more than \$3 billion in worldwide sales. Mr Pavel was asking the Appeal Court to overturn a ruling by the Patents County Court in 1983 that his patent was invalid.

Guy Burkill, representing Sony, told the judges that Mr Pavel had "no disposable capital" and there was no point in an order for costs being made against him personally. The company argued that the development of the Walkman was obvious and its production was just a matter of time.

Richard Miller QC, for Toshiba, which would also have been liable to pay royalties if Mr Pavel had won, said: "This appeal only came about because Mr Pavel was granted legal aid. The legal aid board gave support to what is in effect commercial litigation between companies and we don't understand how Mr Pavel could have possibly been able to pay these sums alone."

He said legal aid was intended for fighting for personal injury damages, not for battles between competing companies.

Lord Justice Neill, Lord Justice Hobhouse and Lord Justice Aldous all agreed that Mr Pavel's original patent was for an invention entitled Stereophonic Production System for Personal Wear, on a belt. The patent was revoked by the Patents County Court because it lacked novelty and was invalid because the idea was obvious.

Lord Justice Aldous said: "Evidence did not establish that the success of the Walkman was due to the inventive concept as claimed. I believe it was not. The Walkman



Andreas Pavel... said he invented Walkman while on holiday, but judges threw out his claim. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SALTICE

would have been just as successful without any belt, clip or loop for belt attachment.

The judges also deplored the "inefficiency, delay and excessive costs of the hearings," which lasted four weeks.

Lord Justice Aldous said: "Mr Pavel ended up needing legal aid and the defendants expended a considerable amount of costs. Whether the fault for these lamentable events is that of the procedure adopted or something else is not for me to decide. However, some alteration is necessary if the purposes of the Patents County Court are to be achieved."

Mr Pavel's original case was the first to be lodged in the Patents County Court, set up to make justice cheaper and quicker for individual inventors and small businesses.

Mr Pavel was not in court to hear yesterday's ruling as he is currently pursuing his legal battle against Sony in the United States.

Eccentric left penniless in quest to be recognised as a seer of the audio revolution

Profile
 Vivek Chaudhary

ANDREAS PAVEL, the youngest son of a German industrialist, has been left virtually penniless following his legal battle to prove he is the original inventor of the Walkman.

"I spent all my inheritance and now rely on friends, so how would it make a difference?" Mr

Favel said, responding to suggestions that could lose even more money after spending more than £1 million in legal costs.

His initial litigation in Britain was launched in 1990 at the Patents County Court. Mr Pavel, who now lives in Milan, is described as an eccentric with a love of the arts. He claims that he invented a version of the Walkman while on holiday in Europe.

"This idea came to me when I went on a hiking holiday and I was unable to listen to my stereo equip-

ment... because it is too bulky to carry around," he said.

"I came up with the idea of how to carry around a high-quality unit that would not impede walking."

"It was not just a flight of fancy — I understood in the early '70s that there were going to be massive changes taking place and wrote a paper, The Coming Audio Revolution, which looked at the opportunities for matching visual with audio experiences."

Mr Pavel's machine comprised a pair of headphones

attached to a bulky belt sporting a small cassette player, amplifier, batteries and a storage pouch.

The Japanese attribute the invention of the Walkman to Toshio Asai, an engineer who put together pieces of equipment so that he could listen to his favourite music while moving around Sony's business machines department.

Throughout his legal actions against Sony and Toshiba, Mr Pavel has maintained that he is not motivated by money.

"All it would mean to me

is that I could get on with my life — I would have the means to do more research, maybe sponsor the arts," he said.

Little is known of Mr Pavel's other inventions, but he insists that he will continue to pursue his case against Sony.

Mr Pavel has also been helped by his brother and patenting agent, and says that he is confident that one day he will be accredited with the invention of the Sony Walkman.

"This has paralysed his life for years," said a friend.

WHO warns of drug-resistant strain of disease

TB 'will kill 30m in next 10 years'

Chris Millill
 Medical Correspondent

TUBERCULOSIS is spreading rapidly throughout the world and is killing more people than at any time in history, the World Health Organisation said yesterday.

British specialists said that the number of cases in Britain had increased every year since 1986 and there had been reports of drug-resistant TB which was difficult and expensive to treat.

A new report by the organisation, launched in London yesterday to mark World TB Day on Sunday, said that the disease would kill 30 million people over the next 10 years. Yet effective treatment was available for £7 per person in some parts of the world.

TB was the most urgent health problem facing the planet, dwarfing fears about the ebola virus or BSE, yet there was still huge complacency in many countries, it said.

Paul Nunn, chief of research for the organisation's global TB programme and a former specialist at Hammersmith Hospital, London, said: "The population of Britain is legitimately concerned about BSE, but reports focus on 10 cases of CJD which may be related to this. There were about 6,000 cases

of TB a year in Britain and six deaths as many people each year as the ebola virus. And, unlike ebola, tuberculosis spreads through the air. Anyone can catch tuberculosis simply by inhaling a TB germ that has been coughed or sneezed into the air. These germs can stay suspended for hours.

"In a closed environment, they can remain alive for up to three years. There is nowhere to hide from tuberculosis. We are all at risk."

The disease had killed 2.1 million people in 1990 but today, because of the increase in population, the rise of HIV, which weakens the immune system, and the failure of control programmes, TB was killing 3 million people a year.

Poor control programmes where people failed to finish the course of treatment were fuelling drug-resistant strains.

Those were extremely difficult to treat and in some cases were incurable.

"With continued neglect and inaction, deaths from TB may continue to rise and kill well over 100 million people in the next 50 years."

John Moore-Gillon, chairman of the British Lung Foundation, said: "Between 1986 and 1994 there has been a steady increase in TB cases in this country. People under 60 forget what a terrible cause of suffering TB was in Britain."

"Tuberculosis kills over 10,000 times as many people each year as the ebola virus. And, unlike ebola, tuberculosis spreads through the air. Anyone can catch tuberculosis simply by inhaling a TB germ that has been coughed or sneezed into the air. These germs can stay suspended for hours.

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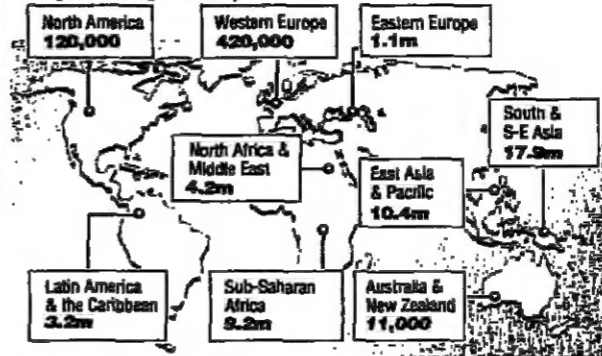
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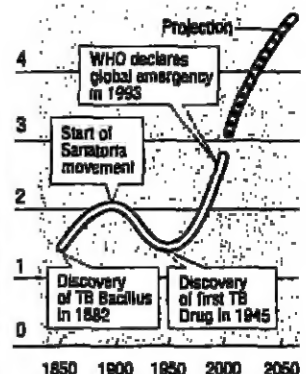
TB on the rise

Total number of actual and projected tuberculosis cases 1990-2000 amongst adults aged 15-44 years.



Annual TB deaths

Deaths in millions



Businesses bullish as inflation falls again

Richard Thomas
 Economics Correspondent

THE Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, received a double dose of good news yesterday when inflation fell to its lowest level for more than a year and the CBI signalled growing business confidence.

Cheaper mortgages and a petrol price war sent the headline inflation rate down to 2.7 per cent last month from 2.9 per cent in January. This is the best performance since November 1994.

The drop follows buoyant figures on house prices and high street spending, released this week.

"Inflation remains low and earnings are steady," a Treasury spokesman said. "Everything looks good on the price front."

The only cloud for the Chancellor came from a pickup in the underlying rate of inflation — which strips out

mortgages — to 2.8 per cent in February, against 2.7 per cent the previous month. The rise was caused by a jump in house prices, as well as upward pressure from desferal, food, toiletries, books and newspapers.

Although some dealers in the financial markets were disappointed by the rise in the underlying rate, most City analysts agreed the figures painted a benign picture of the inflation outlook.

Michael Saunders, chief economist at Salomon Brothers, said: "All the indicators suggest more falls are on the way. I think inflation will trouble me for the 2 per cent mark."

The latest snapshot of manufacturing firms by the Confederation of British Industry, released today, confirms the lessening of price pressure. Twenty-seven per cent of the 1,000 firms contacted by the CBI said their prices had risen; 14 per cent reported

lower price-tags. The gap between these figures is the lowest for six months.

Companies are also upbeat about immediate prospects. Forty per cent of the 1,000 companies contacted by the CBI expect output to rise in the months to July, compared to just 16 per cent predicting a fall. The gap between these two figures is the highest since last May.

But Sudhir Jumanark, a CBI director, said better conditions were not assured. "Companies are growing more confident about the short-term outlook. However, exports have weakened markedly... and the confidence could be fragile," he said.

Businesses, whose exports to the US and Europe have suffered, hope the domestic market will pick up. Most commentators said further rate cuts to boost the British economy were on the cards, though most said Mr Clarke would not act immediately.

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Inquiry into disaster on Mull of Kintyre that killed 25 Ulster anti-terrorist experts contradicts Ministry of Defence

Chinook crash pilots 'not to blame'

Erland Clouston and David Sharrock

THE two pilots in charge of an RAF Chinook helicopter which crashed with the loss of 25 lives should not be blamed for the disaster, a fatal accident inquiry at Paisley Sheriff Court has concluded.

The report, due to be released this morning, has found it impossible to attribute responsibility for the accident in June, 1994, which wiped out 25 senior members of the Northern Ireland anti-terrorist forces.

The findings of the Sheriff, Sir Stephen Young, contradict the official Ministry of Defence investigation which had expressly pinned the catastrophic crash on the fog-bound Mull of Kintyre on errors by Flight-Lieutenant Jonathan Tapper and Richard Cook.

The neutral verdict of the 126-page report will be taken by the pilots' families as a vindication of the claim that they were made scapegoats by an RAF establishment unwilling to concede that the Chinook might have been at fault.

The initial RAF board of inquiry also failed to uncover evidence of "human failings", but a subsequent review by Air Vice-Marshal John Day and Air Chief Marshal Sir William Wratten decided, "regrettably", that Tapper and Cook had been negligent. The relatives of the 25 security personnel who died in the RAF's worst peace time heli-



The wreckage; Flight-Lieutenant Richard Cook, one of the pilots exonerated; and widows of some of the victims in Belfast yesterday when they voiced

copter crash were said by their lawyer, Aidan Canavan, to be extremely disappointed at the inconclusive findings of the 18-day inquiry which many of them attended.

After hearing evidence from, among others, the RAF, the Department of Transport, and the helicopter manufacturers, Boeing, the Sheriff said he was not satisfied that the accident was caused by

"the decision of the crew to overfly the Mull of Kintyre at cruising speed, and their selection for that purpose of the incorrect rate of climb". The families of the victims vented their anger on Sir Stephen for failing to offer them any answers as to why the crash happened and how similar tragedies could be avoided in the future.

Kathleen Rickard, whose husband, Stephen, was in M15, said: "Dare I say it, I believe it was pilot error. I mean it's a very hard thing to say but deep down that's what I believe. I think he [the Sheriff] copped out. I'm quite angry with him."

An RAF source insisted last night that it stood by its revised report. "We say we do know what happened. There was no mechanical failure. It was not the fault of the passengers. We think it was the pilots' fault."

Sir Stephen, who sat without a technical assessor throughout the inquiry, appears to have attached some weight to the reported problems with the Mark 2 model being used to fly the intelligence personnel to a security conference near Inverness. The inquiry heard that a

few months before the crash, test-flying of the twin-engine helicopter was suspended because of gremlins in the sophisticated engine control system.

A colleague of Cook, the co-pilot, testified that he had expressed misgivings about the computer on the day of the crash. Another witness said that Tapper had been worried about the weight the helicop-



disquiet at the report PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRIS BACON AND STEPHEN DAVIDSON

Doctors' guidelines on vegetative state issued

Clare Dyer Legal Correspondent

NEW guidelines to help doctors decide whether patients who seem to be in a vegetative state are beyond recovery were issued yesterday by the Royal College of Physicians.

The guidelines are the first to give clinical details to define persistent vegetative state (PVS), but they may have to be reviewed following the case revealed in the Guardian last week of a man diagnosed as hopelessly vegetative for seven years who has started to communicate with hospital staff.

The new guidelines were recently endorsed by a conference of the medical royal colleges and were drawn up at the suggestion of a Lords select committee on medical ethics.

David London, the college's registrar, said: "Our guidance is based on the best evidence available to us at the time. When we have seen the clinical details of this recent case,

we will review the guidance we have given."

The guide, published in the college's journal, is intended to help doctors distinguish between PVS and other conditions such as brain stem death, coma or locked-in syndrome, some of which have "confusingly similar symptoms".

Patients can wake up from a coma but those in PVS — such as the Hillsborough victim Tony Bland — are beyond recovery. Those with locked-in syndrome are paralysed and unable to speak but their brains function normally.

The guide says a vegetative state may be transient while a patient is recovering from a coma, or it can last until death. PVS should not be diagnosed until the patient has been vegetative for at least a year after head injury, or six months after other causes of brain damage.

The diagnosis should be made independently by two doctors "experienced in assessing disturbances of consciousness", who must ask hospital staff and relatives or carers about the patient's reactions and responses.

The main features to look for are complete lack of awareness; apparent cycles of sleep, with the eyes closed, and waking, with the eyes open (in a coma the eyes remain closed); and normal breathing without need for a ventilator. PVS patients' bodies may move in a purposeless way, and some patients may appear to smile or grimace as a reflex action.

Assessment should be postponed if there is any uncertainty. "The most important role of the medical practitioner... is to ensure that the patient is not sentient, and the views of nursing staff, relatives and carers are of considerable importance and help."

When PVS has been established "further therapy is futile," the guide says. The decision that the situation is hopeless should be communicated sensitively to relatives, who should be given time to consider the implications, including a possible court application to withdraw artificial feeding.

A decision to withdraw life sustaining medication may also need a court application, but decisions not to intervene by resuscitation or prescribing antibiotics, are to be taken by doctors.

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Terrorists lose satellite haven

Andrew Cuff Media Correspondent

THE Government is set to prevent terrorists and political organisations using Britain as a haven from which to beam their propaganda around the world by satellite television.

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heritage Secretary, announced the move to close a legal loophole which allows any organisation to make satellite broadcasts from Britain to non-European countries without a licence.

It is understood the Home Office was concerned about rumours that Mohammed al-Mas'ari, the Saudi Arabian dissident who won his appeal against deportation from Britain to Dominica, was preparing to broadcast views criticising the Saudi regime to the Middle East.

The clampdown was also prompted by the Prime Minister's attendance last week at an international conference in Egypt called to combat worldwide terrorism.

Under the terms of the proscriptive order, which will be laid before the House of Commons next week, the Independent Television Commission will have to licence any satellite service from Britain and beam to non-European countries. The commission already licences all satellite services broadcast in Britain and Europe.

Mrs Bottomley reiterated the Government's decision to examine the practicalities of installing an electronic chip in television sets to protect children from screen violence. Officials from her department, broadcasters and regulators will attend a seminar on Tuesday at which the V-chip (violence chip) technology will be explained.

"People are still very worried about the amount of violence on television... I endorse the spirit behind the concern and if the V-chip works out in practice, I would support it," she said.

Oxfam cuts jobs and projects to save £5.6m in funding crisis

David Brindle, Social Services Correspondent

OXFAM last night announced \$5.6 million spending cuts and the likely loss of more than 30 jobs because of a fall-off in fundraising.

The charity, which has received almost £500,000 from the National Lottery for its work in Britain, declined to blame the fall-off on the lottery's counter-attraction to donors.

It said in a statement: "We have no evidence that the lottery has had any significant impact — it is just one more of many calls on people's disposable income."

Factors identified by the charity included low consumer confidence hitting its high street shops and job uncertainty. In a clear reference to its middle class donor base, the statement also cited "demands on people to pay for health and education."

Large advertisement for Abbey National mortgages with the headline 'MOVE IN ON OUR RANGE OF MORTGAGES.' The text is large and bold, set against a dark background.

Advertisement for Abbey National mortgages. It lists three options: a fixed rate of 5.29% (5.5% APR) until 31st May 1998, a variable rate mortgage with a 2% discount until 31st May 1998, and a 5% cashback on the standard variable rate mortgage. It also includes the Abbey National logo and the slogan 'The habit of a lifetime'.

Advertisement for Abbey National mortgages. It features a silhouette of a couple walking under an umbrella. Below the image, it says 'MORTGAGES' and 'YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.' It includes a detailed disclaimer about interest rates and terms.

Large vertical advertisement on the right side of the page. It features a large number '399' and some text that is partially obscured and difficult to read. It appears to be an advertisement for a product or service.

'There is no scientific evidence to suggest that children are more at risk from eating beef than adults, but I understand very well the concern that parents will have'

'What does one do in the circumstances? One cannot force the public into buying beef. Pure British beef is as safe as you can buy anywhere in the world'

'What we are losing from a few customers who don't really understand the situation, we are more than gaining from people coming here instead of to the supermarkets'



Buyers and sellers gather around the auction ring at Newport cattle market, Gwent, yesterday, as the beef industry resigned itself to its worst crisis

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF MORGAN

'It is an unreasonable decision. It's a disproportionate response and that raises very strong questions of illegality'

'Clearly there is concern. If the veterinary committee decides something must be done, the commission will react rapidly. It is only a problem in the UK and we should not overstate the extent of it'

'We've been telling customers that we are 100 per cent confident that the beef we use is safe'

Fears that all UK cattle will have to be slaughtered

Markets
Prices begin to fall as industry faces up to its greatest crisis

Owen Bowcott
CATTLE prices across Britain tumbled yesterday as supermarkets and exporters cancelled contracts and the Government considered slaughtering every cow in the country.

radicate the disease. "If the advice of the Government's scientific experts is that such a measure is required to safeguard public health, we would go along with it," said a National Farmers Union spokesman.

Advisory
Key changes on scientific panel led to tighter controls

Christopher Elliott
RECENT changes in the make-up of the committee that advises the Government on BSE were crucial in leading to tighter controls over beef cattle, scientists said yesterday.

Abroad
French impose ban as EU concern and anger mount

France
Britain's biggest export market for beef yesterday fended its decision to ban further imports, despite European Commission confirmation that the move was illegal.

Brussels
Two British experts on BSE were summoned to a hastily arranged meeting of European agriculture officials in Brussels yesterday.

Some German politicians went further, demanding a worldwide ban on British beef exports.

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MPs test mood on home farms

Interests
David Hencke and Edward Pilkington
TIM Boswell, junior minister at the Ministry of Agriculture, will have a personal interest in the scientific advice to his ministry on Monday on the slaughter of Britain's entire cattle herd.



Nicholas Budgen: predicts free market solution



Tim Boswell: 'Neighbours depressed about advice'

Germany
There was a demand yesterday for a sweeping ban across the European Union on British beef, animal products used for manufacturing drugs and cosmetics, and animal meal, offal, and beef products.

Counties extend meals ban to cover third of all schools

Education
Edward Pilkington
SCHOOLS and education authorities across the country decided yesterday to take beef off their menus.

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Scandal breaks a year after California ditched affirmative action

University discriminated in favour of rich students

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

WHILE purporting to have an admissions policy discriminating in favour of blacks and female students, the University of California secretly admitted the poorly qualified children of the rich and powerful.

Exposure of the practice in a series of investigative reports in the Los Angeles Times has produced a scandal, with angry parents beginning to launch lawsuits.

Among those who sought favourable consideration for their own student offspring, or for those of relatives or friends at the Los Angeles campus, are Hollywood actresses Sally Field and Ellen Barkin, former Columbia

studio chief Jon Peters, music mogul Mo Ostin, and the nephew of the former oil minister of Saudi Arabia.

Some conservative members of UC's board of regents, who voted to abolish the university's positive discrimination policy last year, also sought backdoor admissions.

The abolition was initiated by California's governor, Pete Wilson, as a vote-grabber to boost his now-moribund presidential ambitions. Yet he too made two unsuccessful requests to UCLA and several more to other campuses for friends and associates.

The former Republican governor, George Deukmejian, made eight requests to UCLA. His efforts secured the admission of two students previously rejected as academically unqualified. Other officials seeking favouritism were the former state lieutenant-governor

(a Democrat); the former assembly speaker, Willie Brown, a Democrat and now mayor of San Francisco; a state senator; and at least five UC regents.

One regent, lawyer and former Republican state assemblyman Bill Bagley, acknowledged that he wrote as many as 10 letters annually. One letter last year brought the acceptance of a banker friend's daughter who had been earlier rejected as unqualified.

Asked if he was being fair in seeking these privileges, Mr Bagley said: "Tell me where the rule book of life says you've got to be fair."

In all, the newspaper investigation showed that 900 people had made more than 2,000 "VIP student" requests since 1980 to the LA campus alone. A computer analysis of the requests found that 70 per cent succeeded in gaining

entry, compared with less than half for all undergraduate hopefuls. More than 200 were admitted after initial rejection and another 75 went ahead of hundreds of rivals who had better test scores.

The charge that poorly qualified women and minorities were entering UC's nine campuses was the main accusation of opponents of affirmative action — a policy that suffered another blow this week when a federal court ruled it was illegal as practised by the University of Texas.

What is clear from the UC expose is that rich donors who keep the university going in an era of public defunding, expect to obtain favourable admissions for students of their choice. Indeed, their requests were labelled as "special interest applications" by the admissions office, and treated differently.

Nato chief fails to sway Russia

James Meek in Moscow

WESTERN foreign ministers are gathering for a summit on Bosnia tomorrow in a Russian capital that still looks unfavourably like hostile territory. A confidence-building trip by Javier Solana, the secretary-general of Nato, has failed to ease Russian fears of the alliance's planned expansion to the east.

After what appears to have been a straight-talking session with President Boris Yeltsin, Mr Solana admitted: "As of today, the positions of the Russian authorities are the same as yesterday."

Mr Yeltsin did not comment on the meeting but had earlier promised that he would be tougher on Mr Solana than his foreign minister, Yevgeny Primakov, had been.

Mr Primakov's spokesman, Grigory Karasin, said: "The position of Russia remains unchangeable — we are against the expansion of Nato to the east. The issue here is not Russia's stubbornness, but her national interests."

Mr Karasin said the issue would be one of the main topics of discussion today with Warren Christopher, the United States secretary of state.

Russia is aware there is little it immediately can do to prevent the alliance's move eastwards. "Russia cannot block the expansion of Nato with anything except rhetoric," said Vladimir Fedres, a commentator with Sevodnya newspaper.

Despite the efforts of Russia's communists and nationalists to pin the blame for Nato's plans on Mr Yeltsin, who five years ago suggested Russia should be a member, the issue remains a minor one in the presidential election campaign compared to domestic miseries and relations with Russia's "near abroad".

Indeed, a speech on east

European security by Mr Christopher in Prague on Wednesday suggests the state department is resigned to a less co-operative Russia whatever the outcome of the June elections. At the same time, concerned that the dialogue of the deaf between Nato and Moscow is condemning Europe to years of confrontation.

"All security questions can be resolved either in close cooperation with Nato, by taking joint decisions, or without Nato," warned Vladimir Lukin, head of the Duma's foreign affairs committee and a member of the liberal Yabloko movement.

"For instance, when we had three times as much conventional weaponry as Nato. Nato deployed tactical nuclear weapons near the borders of the Warsaw Pact. Now Nato has a threefold conventional superiority over us. What are we supposed to do?"

Mr Lukin was referring to the possibility of Russian tactical nuclear weapons being moved west to places like Belarus, Moscow's only unconditional ally in Europe.

Another potential Russian move would be to station tactical nuclear weapons in its western enclave of Kaliningrad, which would become an island surrounded by Nato if all the present applicants to the alliance become members.

Russia's root objection is not so much to Nato's expansion as to its existence after the end of the cold war. Nothing unites Nato's diverse members, Moscow argues, except hostility to Russia.

The rhetoric over Nato contrasts oddly with military cooperation between Russia and the alliance in areas such as Bosnia peacekeeping.

Yesterday saw the first flight of a small jet designed to train Russian pilots, but which could be used in combat. The engines and avionics were made in France.

German media break sex taboo

Ian Traynor in Berlin reports on the affair that triggered an end to notions of traditional discretion

GERMANY'S opposition Social Democrats may have fared miserably at the ballot box this past decade, but when it comes to philandering, the male opposition leadership pushes the male-dominated ranks of Helmut Kohl's government into second place.

Willy Brandt, the late Social Democrat chancellor, was thrice married and a noted womaniser. Oskar Lafontaine, the current SPD leader, is also on his third marriage. And Gerhard Schroeder, the SPD's sole hope for ousting Mr Kohl from the chancellery, was recently thrown out of his house by his third wife, Hiltrud, after allegedly giving her a magazine journalist 19 years his junior.

What distinguishes the Schroeder affair from those of his peers and predecessors, however, is that suddenly the German media have abandoned traditional notions of discretion.

"I can't think of any private story that has received such coverage as the Schroeder case," said a media analyst at the German Society for Communication Studies. "This is completely new here."

The leading tabloid, Bildzeitung, opened the floodgates to prurient reporting as soon as Mr Schroeder, prime minister of the central state of Lower Saxony, was kicked out of the marital home near Hannover. "Schroeder Marriage Kaputt," ran the headline,

prefacing several days of front-page colour photographs of the parties, and of Mr Schroeder and his lover canoodling on a recent trip to Norway.

Even the quality press jumped on the tabloid bandwagon, dressing up its coverage with politically pertinent questions, such as whether the power-hungry politician's career would survive.

Bela Anda, Bildzeitung's chief reporter and the journalist who held exclusive interviews with Hiltrud Schroeder, agrees that German media ethics are changing when it comes to the affairs of the great and the good.

"Even so, we're pretty discreet," he said. "Everyone knew about Schroeder and his girlfriend in Norway. It was only when the Hannover government put out a statement that the marriage was over that we wrote about it."

One media analyst attributes the new obsession with politicians' private lives to fierce circulation battles. But Manfred Goellner, director of the reputable Forsa polling institute, says the media intrusiveness could backfire.

A Forsa poll this month found that nine out of 10 Germans had little or no interest in the private lives of politicians. Only 18 per cent thought reports on their lifestyles affected judgment of politicians, while 83 per cent had not changed their views about Mr Schroeder.

Despite the sensationalist coverage, there is little evidence that he has wrecked his career. "Nobody is now saying Schroeder can't be chancellor," said Mr Goellner. "If he's a good chancellor, he's a good chancellor, that's that, even if he's a bad husband."



Leap year... A Kurdish woman jumps over burning tyres in Istanbul yesterday to celebrate the Kurdish new year, Nowruz. Nearly 5,000 Kurds attended peaceful Nowruz festivities in the city

Children's lingering trauma

Rwandan society will take generations to recover from the horror of genocide, Victoria Brittain reports

TRAUMA among children in Rwanda after the genocide two years ago is so deep it will be decades, if not generations, before the society recovers, Dr Lella Gupta of Unicef said yesterday, appealing for international attention to be refocused on the country's plight.

Some 95 per cent of children interviewed for a countrywide study had witnessed violence and killing. 80 per cent had lost family members and more than a third had seen other children take part in killings, Dr Gupta said.

Drawings and stories produced by the children many months after the genocide still show in graphic detail scenes such as the child's pregnant mother being disembowelled with a machete,

the child's father being hacked to death, their home burned, the child hiding under a heap of dead bodies.

"These children have smelled bodies rotting, felt dead flesh, seen scenes of violence and have a tremendous need to talk all this out in their own language and in their own community," she said.

Dr Gupta, a specialist in grief and trauma, went to Rwanda immediately after the three months of killings in 1994 and worked as a volunteer for the new government, overwhelmed by unmet needs and swamped with offers of inappropriate Western psychiatric care.

"There was not an adult in the country who was not traumatised, and not one Rwandese psychologist left alive in the country. I went to Switzerland and Belgium and recruited three Rwandese who formed the nucleus of a training programme," she said.

In six months, 5,000 teachers, health workers, religious leaders, orphanage staff and others were trained to tackle trauma by encouraging its expression through drawings, story-telling or role-playing.

For the most traumatised children and families, an outpatient clinic has been set up at the National Trauma Centre in Kigali.

"The clinic is open only three days a week because the psychological burden on Dr Gupta's own staff is so intense that a five-day week of counselling would, she says, be unmanageable. Unicef returns a Kigali monthly for two-day debriefing sessions to help them cope with stress.

"One of the most difficult groups for the trauma team to deal with is the 200 young

boys accused of a heinous crime. They have been housed in a separate prison from the other overcrowded ones, but only the 87,000 adults awaiting trial on genocide charges who live with them 1,200 children, mostly babies, and toddlers with their mothers.

"The perpetrators of the genocide are all traumatised too, but they of course know everything — they are not like the survivors, keen to talk," Dr Gupta said.

Genocide trials are the greatest need in Rwanda today, according to Dr Gupta. But international funding for the judiciary has not come, and even the international tribunal in Arusha has been extremely slow in getting indictments. No one has yet been brought to trial.

"The tribunal, or the beginning of trials in the country, will be a huge symbolic help to show people that the culture of impunity which has ruled since 1959 has come to an end," Dr Gupta said.

Papandreu defies the odds to leave hospital

Helena Smith in Athens

FOLLOWERS wept and threw flowers yesterday as a frail Andreas Papandreu, Greece's former prime minister, tottered out of hospital after a four-month battle for life. "I leave here with love," said Mr Papandreu, aged 77, before being driven to his villa on the outskirts of Athens.

"Everyone here would have willingly given him every thing, including their organs, in order for him to survive," said Giorgos Kotaris, a factory worker, wiping the tears from his eyes.

Mr Papandreu waved feebly from the rear seat, where he leaned back, expressionless. He held in one hand the life-support tubes which still protrude from his body and will be hooked into machines at his home.

The Socialist leader had not been seen in public since he was rushed into intensive care with pneumonia on November 20.

Attached to life support machines for much of his stay at the clinic, he was initially given a 3 per cent chance of surviving an array of acute respiratory, heart and kidney problems.

The Pasok leader's exit from the hospital, with his controversial wife, Mimi, at his side, crows a career marked by his ability to overcome seemingly overwhelming political and physical setbacks.

"Even we have been surprised by his determination to go on living," said Stefanos Geroulakos, one of Mr Papandreu's 25-strong team of doctors.

In January, as doctors held out little hope for his life, Mr Papandreu stepped down as prime minister in favour of fellow socialist Costas Simitis.



Great survivor: Supporters threw flowers as he passed

News in brief

Death penalty stand punished

SWEEPING aside the last pocket of resistance to capital punishment in America's third largest state, the New York governor, George Pataki, yesterday removed a senior prosecutor who had refused to seek the death penalty for the alleged killer of a police officer, Ian Katz in New York writes.

After a week long standoff between the two men that ignited a rare public debate on the morality of capital punishment, Governor Pataki yesterday dismissed the Bronx district attorney, Robert Johnson, from the case, handing it over to the state's attorney-general.

Poles demand cut in crime

About 20,000 demonstrators marched in silence through Warsaw yesterday to demand action against street crime — Poland's third such large demonstration in a month — after robbers shot dead a student earlier this week, writes Sanchia Berg in Warsaw.

Violent crime has increased sharply in Poland since the end of communist rule. Police said that in 1990 there were 92 incidents involving weapons, but last year there were 1,467.

Aid workers held

Five United Nations aid workers including a Briton were kidnapped yesterday at Balidung airport, south-west of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, as they prepared to leave the war-torn country, a UN official said. — AP.

World 'on verge of water crisis'

AN international conference in Beijing has concluded that the world must act soon to avert a water crisis, a senior United Nations official said.

Some 80 countries and 40 per cent of the world's people are experiencing "water stress", Dr Wally N'Dow said in an interview at the end of the conference.

The world water supply was expected to be seriously stretched within 15 to 20 years, he said, adding that the danger of war over scarce water hune not just over the Middle East but over other areas. — Reuter.

The new Audi A6

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The new Audi A6 is the first executive car with 5 valve engine technology derived from the racetrack. For more information and test drive details call 0345 998877.

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This is not some frilly-shirted strut-strut affair with a carnation clenched between the teeth, but an extraordinary blend of gypsy dancing, jazz, blues and classical ballet. His feet hammer the floor with the intensity of a woodpecker; as he pirouettes, the sweat spins off in silver showers and the audience longs to be soaked with it.

Review page 4

Taiwan

Now free one second

FREEPHONE

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "مركز التواصل"

Ulster reverts to type

Northern Irish politics slip back into bad old ways

FOR once on Northern Ireland it was the Paisleyite Democratic Unionists who got it right yesterday. Having gone away to draw up election proposals for the Northern Ireland peace negotiations that would be "broadly acceptable" to all the parties...

Westminster-style elections but whose participation is universally deemed to be crucial, are being given the smallest available stake in the process. Sinn Fein, the ghost at this cold feast, is opposed to the elections in any case...

And yet the real question for all the parties — as the government clearly calculates — is whether they have any alternative but to go ahead with the elections even in the form proposed by the Government. Paddy Ashdown rightly dubbed the scheme a dog's breakfast...

Beef, politics and a question of trust

Ministers are hiding behind the confused opinion of experts

WHO are the true victims: consumers or farmers? No one knows but day two of the new era — since ministers conceded on Wednesday that mad cow disease might be transmitted to humans — produced dire forecasts for both groups. Professor Richard Lacey, a leading microbiologist who was among the first to raise the alarm over infected cattle...

What should consumers do? The only thing they can do is wait. The biggest threat is not existing beef but the meat consumed before the 1989 restrictions on beef offal were imposed. Criminally, even after ministers belatedly banned beef offal from animal feed in July, 1988, they waited another 15 months before banning it from the human food chain...

An end to the feelbad factor?

There may even be a modest consumer recovery on its way

WHISPER it quietly but the inflation figures may be better than they look from the Government's angle. It's too early to be replaying videos of Return of the Feelgood Factor — but the feelbad factor may be waning. Prices are either rising or falling depending on which index you look at. Either way the Government won't be displeased. The official RPI fell from 2.9 per cent to 2.7 per cent in the year to February reflecting lower petrol and mortgage interest rates...

year when this started showing falls in living standards, but it is available on request. It shows that while typical workers had a real wage cut of 2.0 per cent back in September, that gap is now only 0.25 per cent. Since, thanks to the Budget, taxes will fall by over £3 billion next month (compared with a £1 billion rise last year) average employees may see living standards rise. This may tempt them to spend some of this year's extra-budgetary largesse (electricity rebates, maturing Tessa's, windfall building, society gains etc). Since even the Chancellor's monetarist advisers are giving him cont. adictory advice (doves like Patrick Minford think interest rates should be cut by two percentage points but hawks want higher rates to fight monetary growth) the way is clear to lop more off interest rates without frightening the horses. If there isn't a consumer recovery this year, it won't be through lack of trying.



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Letters to the Editor

Mr Dorrell's bad science

THE PRIME Minister may be quite right to say that there is "no scientific evidence that BSE can be transmitted to humans". But it is an unhelpful statement that betrays his ignorance of the nature of science.

THE responsibility of government ministers is to gather the best facts available and make a judgment based, among other things, on the precautionary principle. As Agriculture Minister, John Gummer conspicuously failed to apply this principle and, in doing so, has carried out an experiment on the British people which may prove extremely costly.

IT WILL be somewhat more convincing of a connection between BSE and CJD, firstly, if someone will explain why humans have not contracted CJD from eating lamb or mutton and, secondly, what of the view that BSE itself is caused by over-zealous application of toxic insecticides?

Science has apparently provided no proof that BSE may be, or has been, passed on to humans, nor has it provided proof that it cannot be. What science does appear to have done is to have provided some evidence that is consistent with the hypothesis — that the incidence of cases of CJD is consistent with the possibility of CJD being linked to BSE, coupled with the view that the link is the most likely cause of those cases.

WHY does the Government believe that it is only the spinal cord and the brain which are affected by BSE? Have they been advised that the nervous tissue changes radically as it leaves the spinal cord?

DEFINITELY a classic of the genre. A junior Scottish (Scottish?) minister, the Earl of Lindsay, admits that some BSE-infected cattle may not have been destroyed in the late 1980s because of the Government's refusal to compensate farmers for destroying them.

That judgment is not for the scientist per se: it can only be made by the individual consumer or as advised by government. The Government is not giving that advice. Mr Dorrell's statements add up to little more than "not us, gov".

IF it doesn't, then the risk extends, as the nerve fibres do, through the flesh. If eating any part of the flesh is eating potentially infected nervous tissue, we should be told.

As Adam Ingram knows full well, the reduction in the Department of Trade and Industry's net R&D expenditure figures is due to the withdrawal from the fast-breeder reactor programme and the very significant receipts obtained under the Launch Aid programme. These are special features and have no implication for the future size of the Office of Science and Technology's science budget.

What is a matter of value judgment whether those facts lead to an acceptable risk. That judgment is not for the scientist per se: it can only be made by the individual consumer or as advised by government.

THIS Government has let down the farmers, as much as the public. It changed the safety rules on rendering, it failed to act when the problem was small, it failed to compensate farmers fully for infected animals, it wrongly advised us all as to the likely extent of the problem. Until we have a better answer, don't eat beef.

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Bullet proof

DJ SKILLMAN (Letters March 20) "has not heard one convincing argument for the public to be allowed to keep guns in their homes". In Switzerland, every male of military age is compelled by law to keep an automatic rifle (of the kind outlawed in the UK after Hungerford) plus 200 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition in their house.



While recognising that the placid, thrifty and bourgeois Swiss will not be high on the approval list of those who contribute to the Guardian letters page, could any of your correspondents have a shot at a "convincing argument" as to why that country has the lowest homicide rate in Europe?

MUSIC is constantly trivialised; great works are pulled apart and used as advert signature tunes and, worst of all, Muzak. When Deutsche Grammophon plans a CD of the adagios from Mahler's symphonies, the motivation is commercial, not educational as suggested in your leader (Claudio Abbado's classical weepies, March 20).

Mahler's great symphonies deserve to be heard whole. If people cannot be bothered to try, they will have missed one of life's joys. Certainly excerpts reduced to jingles will not compare.

THE controversy over the proposed Cambridge professorship named after the former chair of the tobacco giant BAT Industries (March 21) can be easily resolved. The university should insist it be called the Sir Patrick Sheehy Professorship of Cancer Prevention, supported by a generous endowment from BAT.

THIS moving experience taught me the distress caused by the effects of this devastating illness. The gradual loss of memory and reason, the inability to recognise loved ones, the sudden outbursts of uncharacteristic violence and the total destruction of normal function must rate Alzheimer's as one of the most harrowing diseases known to man.

WHAT Florence Nightingale (Leader, March 21) chose to do with her libido is her own business — especially since, to do the work she felt called to, she gave up marriage with a man who would (according to her diary) have satisfied her both sexually and intellectually.

It was not Ahmadnagar Fort (whence Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru was released in 1944 (a long, torrid journey without maps, Outlook, March 9). It was the jail in Almora, a pleasantly cool district headquarters in the Himalayan foothills. And it was I who served him cont. adictory advice (doves like Patrick Minford think interest rates should be cut by two percentage points but hawks want higher rates to fight monetary growth) the way is clear to lop more off interest rates without frightening the horses.

Even my first reaction "What a pity that she had to suppress it" seems unduly patronising. And if her Swedish masseur did her good, he should have been subsidised by a grateful public.

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Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 837 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. We may edit them: shorter ones are more likely to appear.

It is vital that we endeavour to find solutions to this terrible disease by investing more in scientific research. This is why I am lending my wholehearted support to the Alzheimer's Research Trust (GJ Livanos House, Granham Road, Cambridge CB2 5LQ). The trust is currently raising funds to complete Europe's first multi-disciplinary research centre, solely dedicated to finding a treatment cure.

Even my first reaction "What a pity that she had to suppress it" seems unduly patronising. And if her Swedish masseur did her good, he should have been subsidised by a grateful public.

... albeit in a government that takes science seriously

IT IS a great pity that Adam Ingram MP chose Science Engineering and Technology (SET) Week to attack the Government's record on supporting our SET base (Letters, March 18). SET Week is not a glossy PR exercise, but one on which I believe we had all-party support for putting across the importance of science, engineering and technology to the general public and to industry. It is fun with a serious purpose.

SETtlement for the science budget announced last November showed that it was in safe hands and we have worked together with the education departments to make better use of the resources available for maintaining the research infrastructure in the universities. I recognise the importance of this if we are to continue to encourage excellent research and teaching in our universities.

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SET Week has a vital role to play in promoting a culture of research, innovation and training. Scientists, engineers and technologists should have a higher status in our society if we are confidently to face the competitive challenges ahead.

Keep voting in proportion

PETER HAIN (Letters, March 20) is wrong in saying that the alternative vote (AV) is the only system of proportional representation (PR) which retains the existing single member constituencies. The weighted parliamentary vote (WPV) also has this virtue. Moreover, it is exactly proportional. The voter only has to make one cross against one name, as at present. No need to place a number of candidates in order as with AV, and every vote counts. No boundary changes are needed. Demographic changes do not affect it, and PR purists could find no fault with it.

FOR ME, the most significant part of Hugo Young's commentary on Tony Blair and PR (March 19) was the observation that Blair was not yet convinced that it was in his party's interests if only the House of Commons were full of members whose first thought was "What is best for my country?" instead of "What is best for my party?" and whose words and actions were governed by conscience rather than party.

PETER HAIN states "other PR options require master constituencies... which break the democratic principle of local accountability". Wrong. They would increase local accountability because a candidate for whom an elector had voted would have a much greater chance of being elected (by STV) and hence of being accountable.

A simple way of achieving this would be to dismantle all whips' offices and make every vote a free one. Then we might not need constitutional reform, since voters would not feel so much need for "their" party to get elected.

A Country Diary

NORTHERMBERLAND: We find this week. Looking for chippings for our fire in Molested Wood, I picked up a pair of cast roe buck antlers. Roe deer males cast horn early in the year but to find a pair together is extraordinary. The last pair I know which were found like this were picked up by a stalker many years ago on the hill of Meall Chomrie by Loch Rannoch. Few roe cast horns are picked up at all, not surprising because they are small, stick-like objects resembling dried twigs. The month when a buck sheds his horns varies with the individual but generally speaking the older the buck the sooner he becomes clean. No two bucks throw identical horns and this variety is one of the attractions of such trophies. As their appearances vary so does their weight. Thin, weak horns may weigh only a few ounces, whilst those more rugged and heavily bearded will turn the scale at over a pound. The controlling factor is the kind of food available, weather to a lesser degree has some effect.

but this in turn governs the natural food which is procurable. A further contributory factor is the soil. Certain soils have a high calcium content and roe bucks on such formation have stronger heads than their less fortunate brethren. For example, in Dorset there is chalk among the flint and deer in that county are noted for their good heads. A previous diary of mine about the sad death of wild birds in our garden this year prompted many letters from readers. Typical is the one from Michael Corley in Norfolk: "For anyone with a garden, seeing and hearing the wild birds was a large part of the pleasure of living in the country. Now there is no robin, no blackbird, no finches, no brave song thrush, no lovable house-sparrows, occasionally a party of this passing quickly through. Nothing but a silent desolation..." He reckons this stems from the arrival of sparrowhawks six years ago and suggests a garden-lovers lobby to fight the raptor lobby.

Handwritten signature or scribble at the bottom of the page.

Diary
Joanna Coles

MY friend Charles Kennedy — revered in intellectual circles as the John Stuart Mill of the Lib Dems — has temporarily laid aside his eagerly awaited translation of the Iliad in favour of a pair of agonisingly plain pills. Instead, my sources at Westminster — where Charles occasionally moonlights as an MP — have spotted him positively panting around Parliament Square apparently in some sort of mysterious, wicker ritual. Confronted, Charles explains all. He has agreed to run in this year's I Can't Believe It's Not Flora London Marathon! Mindful, however, of his publisher's mysterious wicker ritual, Oxford's bookshops are clamouring for his definitive interpretation — Charles has decided the full 26 miles might take too long, so he has opted for the shorter version, whereby 26 celebs will run one mile each, accompanied by a "running partner" — to raise money for the charity Heart to Heart Challenge. To this end Charles is looking for a Guardian reader to accompany him, and I have decided the fairest way to make this opportunity available to all is to launch a competition. The winner will be the person who writes the most interesting letter to the nearest pound. (Kilograms will not be accepted.) Answers on a postcard please, to reach the Diary by the end of next week. The winner must be prepared to raise some local sponsorship for themselves and is expected to pose for photos after the race is completed. Weight loss is optional.

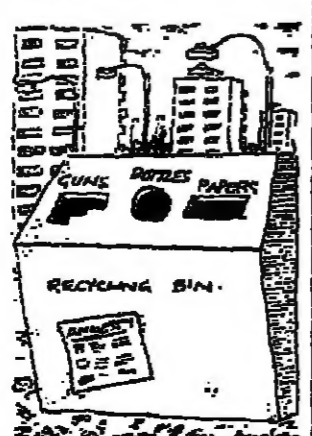
SO sensitive those men of the United States of America National Rifle Association. In their collective wisdom they have decided to hold this year's annual conference on April 19. Which just happens to mark the anniversaries of the Oklahoma bombing, Waco and the Battle of Lexington and Concord.

MY friend RUPERT Christiansen, gelatinous opera critic of the Spectator, is wrestling with a terrible dilemma. His new flat overlooks that of the perfectly chested Paula Yates, and Rupert is wondering whether he could raise money from the tabloids by selling them inside information gleaned from his peeping-tommy. "This is what I see," he says, tantalising Specie readers with his wide-eyed observations. "Their nanny is plainly a jolly good thing, solid and dependable. Bob comes around occasionally, he wore a rather swish sheepskin coat last Wednesday and took the girls to school. Michael (Eutychence, Paula's new beau) on the other hand looks a bit of a Charlie. I did not care for his ridiculous, bright yellow, baggy trousers. Paula has hung some new, white spotted curtains in her bedroom this week. I admit to a frisson of envy. A large fortune is surely his for the asking."

DRAW your attention to an ad in the current edition of the House Magazine, which serves our good members at Westminster. "Secretary required by Conservative member. Good WP skills and previous experience essential. CV and photograph to PO Box HM10170." What foresight to foreground that. This, I am convinced, is a most effective method of ensuring the MP has as wide and as colourful a selection of applicants as is humanly possible.

MEANWHILE stationery shops around Whitehall are suffering an urgent drought of those useful yellow Post-It Notes. The culprit is Icarus, a new breed of civil servant who, post-Scott report, have abandoned the age-old practice of sending memos on nice, clean, eminently traceable sheets of A4. In favour of scribbling all controversial orders on a much, much harder-to-file Post-It Note.

JARGON alert: the city of Toronto has renamed its manholes. After a 12-10 vote by the council, it was decided they should be renamed because they were sexist. From now on council workmen must refer to them as maintenance holes.



Casual cruelty for an old soldier

Commentary Peter Preston

SOMEbody has to say a kind word for Peter Preston: and if this column can't manage it, who can? The P Preston in the current frame isn't the one who used to write radio plays, or the former Permanent Secretary at the Overseas Development Ministry (once memorably and embarrassingly the recipient of a duplicate lunch invite from Islamabad's Industry Minister so that we both turned up at the same restaurant and had to let his visiting nibs choose who to share a curry with). No, the latest Peter Preston to trouble the headline writers is variously the "second weirdo", "the simpleton with an arsenal", the "Rambo boys' old fool" or "the Pied Piper of Chalfont" — according to tabloid taste. He's no relation. And he is also, among other things, a

victim of crime deserving the normal sympathy we all need when a burglar breaks into our home and steals our treasures. Mr Preston is a retired (Royal Artillery) soldier from Chalfont St Giles. His hobby, at which he excels, is shooting. He has hovered on the edge of international team selection. He kept his guns in a locked security cabinet at home. He showed them, from time to time, to visiting children, just as one of my uncles would display the German officer's daggers he brought back from the second world war. He freely admits he made a sad error. "I love my shooting but I should not have allowed any boys to see the guns. You only have to make one mistake. That mistake, on current indications, may now include the loss of his gun-club membership and the cancellation of his licence to own arms — lasting things to add to the fleeting but great humiliation of a ritual stoning in the media stocks. Preston's problem, of course, was one damned thing after another. The burglary at his house, the chase and the retrieval of lost property might (in unconnected February, say) have rated only a

page top in the Chalfont Courier. Small flap: nobody hurt. The story would not have led the BBC national radio news. It would barely have made item 7 on the BBC regional news. But Mr Preston's break-in followed hard on the heels of the Dunblane horror, at just the point that the politicians and pundits were talking about gun licences. Bingo. Or, as the Sun benignly put it: "Preston had gun permits, as did the pervert Hamilton, who slaughtered 16 children." Mr Preston is 67, and thus an "oddball pensioner", a "confused old soldier". Worse, he is a bachelor: no need to hang too many adjectives on that washing line, gun. Worse still, like all of us, he has neighbours who appear not to think too highly of his scruffy sitting room, his "dimmy" front door, or his habit of giving sweets to kids. Such neighbours supposedly make complaints to the police family protection unit — although even the Daily Mail finds space to note that a "police spokesman said it might be a bit of a stretch to say that he had never been the subject of a serious allegation". (Serious, as in worth the time of day.) A vicar who knows him well attests that

"he is a very gentle soul" — but by this time the Mail lead story is mopping up on page 2. The front page is filled by a picture of Mr Preston, who seems unaware that one of his trouser fly-buttons is undone. (Did the friendly photographer with the flash point that out before pressing the button?) When something as despicable, as mind-numbing, as Dunblane happens, there is immediately little but grief and shock. The politicians fall silent. Yet in the second phase, something has to be done. Thomas Hamilton held gun permits and used those guns for slaughter. One natural strand of inquiry, of course, includes the future of such permits and such guns. For once, though, I find myself wholly on Michael Howard's side. This is the stuff of

Maybe there's a hamburger man called Preston out there waiting to be infamous for 15 minutes

calm inquiry, not lathering hysteria. It would be a better world, and a better Britain, if no private citizen carried guns or had access to them. But how do you edge towards such nirvana? Legislation covering the sale of guns varies across the globe, across the United States, across Europe. Our borders are island porous. We like it that way. What comes in a car boot by day can also arrive by boat at night. Ask

the IRA. Call Colonel Gaddafi. Ring your friendly Mafia supplier. There's no perfection there. There's no guarantee that all the bureaucratic police checks known to mankind (Daily Mail hails bureaucracy shock) will spot a potential madman on day one or day 301. Call Lord Lucan, if you can find him. Gun clubs are vulnerable to burglary, just like private homes. There is absolutely no evidence that a Hamilton without a licence would not have discovered another mode of massacre. Monsters set to burn in hell (as the Sun might add) will always find a way. None of this means that Nothing Can Be Done. But it necessarily limits both ambition and hyperbole. The Pied Piper of Chalfont St Giles, if we pause, is testimony to that. Strip out the Mallesque adjectival spin, which could equally turn the revered Paul Johnson into an "oddball pensioner pundit" or the Lord Chancellor into a "divorced Scottish OAP". Button up the errant facts. Ask the gobby neighbours for facts amongst their gatepost yack. Remember that a man living alone is not a pariah and, in what we otherwise like to call "a community", may enjoy Creamline toffees and chatting to young people. The frantic show, of course, moves on. Maybe there's a hamburger man called Preston out there waiting to be infamous for 15 minutes. But I had supposed that the legacy of Dunblane would be sombre reflection and a welling sorrow, not the thrashing infliction of more cruelties. I was wrong. And I think I'd still feel that if the old soldier in question was called Fred Bloggs.

Don't look back in anger, Jack — channel it!



Bel Littlejohn

THE year was 1976. The revolution was punk. And I was there at the birth. Even 20 years ago I could tell songs like No Future had an amazing future. And still when I feel really freaked out about the way the country is going, I find myself putting it on — not the original version, but the newer, fresher version on the indispensable Nana Mouskouri Sings The Very Best of New Wave CD, just out. Let's take a schlep down memory lane, back full 20 years to the days when Sid and Johnny and the rest of that defiant crew were shaking their fists at the class-ridden social conditions into which they had been environmentalised. You know it was for real, and sure enough three years later as a result of the Pistols' mould-breaking songs, the whole rotten Tory Government came crashing down.

On at least it would have done if it had been a Tory Government. Instead, it was a Labour Government which came crashing down, and it was Welcome to Thatcher's Britain — making the Pistols' songs such as Fascist Regime all the more prophetic. Like many other people, I was just past my early-to-late 20s at the time, and I was angry as hell. God, I was angry. I remember once seeing a can in the street, and just kicking it without caring who saw me. Another time, I bought a great big safety pin, stuck it any-old-how on a shirt and then wore it angrily around the house. Once in the car my mates and I all sang "God Save The Queen" in fascist regime. Gotta let off a bit of steam! all the way to East Cheam at the very top of our voices, only lowering the volume when passing through built-up areas.

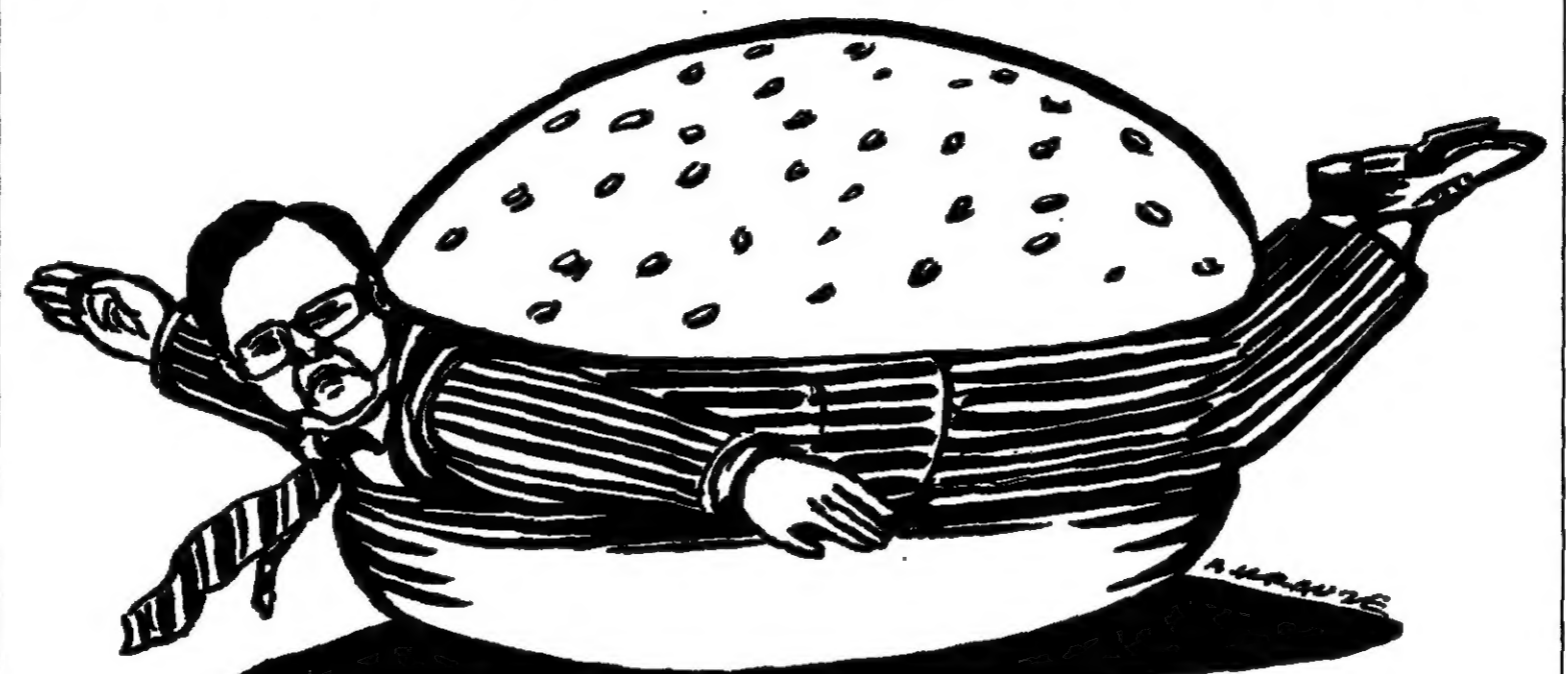
And tell you, my generation never ever lost that rage, that burning desire for revolution. It goes without saying that many of the names we now associate with the Blair revolution were in fact early followers of punk. As is widely known, Jack Straw was a founding member of The Damned, only they got rid of him when Rat Scabies decided they didn't want a washboard as part of their overall music policy. So Jack joined New Labour instead, in search of something more mellow. But take it from me, Jack remains a punk at heart. Only last summer, I saw him seething with real anger, so much so that he began quoting from

Johnny Rotten. Jack was driving me to Waltham Road for an urgent meeting when the lights turned red. "Come on, come on," he muttered through clenched teeth, tapping on the steering-wheel of his Volvo saloon with mounting rage. At that point, two youths appeared, one with a bucket of water, the other with a wiper. "Bloody hell!" yelled Jack. "It's those damned squeaky merchants again! Talk about fascist regime!" The lights went green, and we managed to drive off without surrendering our principles or our money. But the incident made me think. "You must channel that anger, Jack!" I implored him. "You must be sure those punk ideals we once nurtured never, ever die! You must turn that anger into something relevant, something that can truly change this country of ours! You must form a new Labour Social Policy (Squeaky Prohibition Group)!"

As you can imagine, there were tears in our eyes. And Jack really did learn to channel that anger of his: he has now privately promised that the very first act of an incoming New Labour government will be the introduction of tougher sentencing for squeaky merchants, with up to five years' detention for a first offence and life for offences committed thereafter. So our old ideals are not dead. Let's boogie!

Jack isn't the only ex-punk in New Labour, not by a long chalk. Cherie's career as a backing vocalist with X-Ray Speas in the Fascist Regime is documented by Ms Polly Styrene. "Cherie could pogo like there was no tomorrow," records Ms Styrene in her autobiography. "Though she always took care to fix her hair, Cherie's wig to her hair was extra pins so as to stop it bouncing off." Less widely known is John Prescott's brief period playing bass for The Stranglers, before he left in a tizz after the other members refused to include the "God Save The Queen" fascist regime. Gotta let off a bit of steam! all the way to East Cheam at the very top of our voices, only lowering the volume when passing through built-up areas.

Now that the Sex Pistols are reforming, my own PR company, Bel and Friends, is hoping to see the world. I hadn't seen the lads in years, but they're looking better than ever, though Sid's the only one to have lost any weight. For their promotional tour, funded jointly by New Labour and the Sex Pistols, the lads have agreed to wear smart, double-breasted suits, to sing a selection from the New Seekers, and to hawk, retch or spit only into special New Labour spittoons provided for the purpose. Every one's agreed it's a perfect way of getting the party's message across. Change and renewal: like the Pistols, we in New Labour have put the 70s behind us. But with no loss of real anger.



The diet of words

Paul Brown explains why he gave up eating beef while reporting on the mad-cow affair. Below, government adviser Mike Painter examines the risk of a major epidemic

WITHIN minutes of the announcement that 10 people had died from a new form of illness which seemed to be a human version of "mad cow disease", the propaganda battle to save British beef had begun. Top of the agenda for two Cabinet ministers in their statements to Parliament was how to stop the panic and protect the beef market. Neither minister attempts to answer the big question which could be heard in pubs, on buses and street corners all over the land yesterday. It was simply: "Does that mean we might all get mad cow disease?" The answer may be

finally found an opportunity to ask, late in the day at a press conference, ministers ducked it immediately. Over to the experts... Douglas Hogg, the agriculture minister, said he would go on setting beef. Dorrell, for health, looked glum. Dorrell, almost as an afterthought, mentioned that a helpline with a freephone number had been set up to counsel the millions of people who might be worried about having eaten infected beef. Ring the number and you get a message from the Government's chief medical officer, Dr Kenneth Calman. It is that the risk from eating beef now is "extremely small" and he will go on eating it. There is nothing at all about symptoms, what to do if you feel ill, no words of reassurance about it being a chance in a million. The whole direction of the advice is: do not worry and keep eating beef. Journalists reporting the BSE saga for a decade heard little else. The professional scientists and pressure groups that have dared to suggest anything else have been ridiculed and regarded as

screamers, however good their credentials. Yet very late in the day we have been told that on this occasion they appear to have been right. Or to put it in the precise words of the United Kingdom Encephalopathy Committee: "Although there is no direct evidence of a link, on current data and in the absence of any credible alternative the most likely explanation at present is that these [10] cases are linked to exposure to BSE before the introduction of the specified bovine offal ban in 1989. This is cause for great concern." In other words, the most likely cause of the deaths was people eating offal before 1989, the sort of material common in dozens of foods everywhere except vegetarians regularly eat. In order to make sure the public were protected, the alarm was raised in the form of an offal which were in place before this week were tightened still further. Yesterday a reader rang up to complain that the Meat and Livestock Commission was standing by its claim that eat-

ing beef was completely safe. Its poster, put out in December, which said there was no proven link between BSE and human illness was still correct, it claimed. It was not wrong in drawing it from butchers. It was for a confession: writing BSE stories takes its toll, and this journalist stopped eating beef four years ago. As it happens, it appears it was too late. We learn rather sadly that one of the victims had been a vegetarian for two years — but he once had a taste for burgers. We have been badly misled. The lives of thousands appear to have been put at risk to prevent financial harm to a powerful lobby, the farming and food industries. As the evidence has piled up it has seemed increasingly likely that a human form of CJD would emerge. What still comes as a shock is the continued ministerial manipulation, even now, which continues to try and keep us buying beef.

Paul Brown is the Guardian's environment correspondent

What's likely to happen next?

PEOPLE understandably have plenty of questions about what will happen in future with BSE and CJD. To the main question, is there going to be a big epidemic of CJD, the answer has to be quite simple and boring: we just don't know. There could be — but then again nothing of the sort may develop. I personally doubt that we will get hundreds of thousands of human cases: yet I can't imagine it will just stop at the 10 cases identified this week as "new". We just don't know where it will rest between 10 and 100,000. It is important at this stage to try not to panic, to keep a grip on the perspective. We at the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee believe that the measures that have been put in place can make meat as safe to eat as one can reasonably expect. That's not to say that people who

ate beef in the years before controls were first introduced in 1989 did not run a greater risk; but we just don't know what that risk was. When cases are identified of a new strain of a disease, as has happened with those reported this week, we as scientists seek to discover why. Our hypothesis is that it is related in some way to the BSE agent, simply on the grounds that these cases have occurred out of the blue. We can see that it follows a rise in BSE infection of cows during the mid- and late-1980s. The changes in the infected cows' brains were similar to those caused in humans by CJD — although we do not believe the cause of sporadic CJD to be the same as BSE. But you then have to accept that the possibility of a link exists between the two — even though it remains unclear how the agent of the disease spread. It is too simplistic to say

it is through beef. You need to discover through what part of the cow the muscle? The offal? What we have found is that tissue from the central nervous system — the brain and the spinal cord — contains high levels of infectivity. Research has also shown evidence that ordinary muscle (the part eaten as steak) has not been shown to cause infection in laboratory animals. Faced with these findings, and the results of plenty of other similar experiments on other tissues, you are led to think that the further you get from the central nervous system, the less likely you are to find tissue capable of transmitting the BSE agent. You then want to discover how ground bits of the central nervous system entered the human food chain — for apart from the few people who enjoy eating calves' brains, most of us do not knowingly eat the CNS. There is the possibility that

trimmings found their way into meat products; maybe mechanically recovered meat could have introduced bits of spinal cord. These are all possibilities; but we still have to prove the hypothesis. With other diseases, it is far simpler to identify the cause. For salmonella, we would list all the risk factors we could think of and see how many of our cases had been exposed to this risk. The problem here is that we are talking of risk exposure that took place eight years ago; and I find it hard to remember what I ate last week. So again it is very hard to know whether you need to ingest the transmission agent just once, or take in a certain amount over a longer period. To assess a risk scientifically you need to compare a group of those infected with a control group: such methods have worked very well in the past, particu-

We have chosen our way of life. Surely we can choose our way of death?

79% of people in this country believe that it should be legal for those incurably ill and in severe distress to be allowed to request a peaceful, dignified end to their suffering. Our law does not agree: so the agony continues.

If you support voluntary euthanasia, the best way to achieve a change in the law is to join the Voluntary Euthanasia Society. Do it today.

Join the Voluntary Euthanasia Society and you will receive a free Advance Directive, which enables you to specify your wish not to be subjected to unwanted medical intervention if incurably ill.

Please make me a member of VES and keep me informed about the campaign. I enclose £10 annual subscription (joint membership £15).

Name: _____
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Finance Guardian



Mike Wallis, chief executive of building materials group Brunelife Aggregates, at the group's Ebiebeaton Quarry at Monifieth, near Dundee. The group yesterday announced pre-tax profits of £907,000 for 1995 compared with £912,000 in 1994. Mr Wallis said the results were "credible" in the face of weak demand in Scotland. PHOTOGRAPH: MURDO MACLEOD

Labour rings nuclear alarm

Simon Beavis
Industrial Editor

LABOUR will next week step up the pressure on the Government to abandon its £2.5 billion nuclear privatisation in what will be the last chance for MPs to debate the issue before the sale this summer. Amid signs that Ian Lang, the Trade and Industry Secretary, is preparing to go on the offensive over the troubled sale to ensure it keeps to its July flotation timetable.

Labour is to devote one of its supply days to a debate on Tuesday. It will call for the flotation to be dropped claiming that the deal will hurt taxpayers and could threaten safety. Margaret Beckett, shadow industry secretary, said: "This is a critical opportunity for the Commons to debate the costs to the taxpayer and the potential hazards to the public of the Government's plans for nuclear privatisation. Labour will be calling for the sale to be stopped."

clear Electric and Scottish Nuclear — under the newly created holding company, British Energy — has been rushed through by the Government without new legislation. Legal changes required for the sale were covered by the Electricity Act which paved the way for the privatisation of the rest of the power industry. The legislation held good for nuclear power even though the industry was ripped out of the earlier sale after the City took flight at its multi-billion liabilities for cleaning up and waste.

Although the sell-off plans were put through a highly critical examination by the Commons trade and industry select committee, there has been little debate on the sale in the chamber since the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, set the industry on course for the private sector last May. Labour contends that the sale has had relatively little scrutiny even though it could raise more revenue than the Railtrack privatisation and will be more important in the Treasury's attempt to raise cash for pre-election tax cuts.

Since the select committee report, it has been disclosed that the Government was considering abandoning the flotation and selling the industry to Duke Power of the US in a trade deal. It faced immediate embarrassment over the disclosure when the American company tried to play down its interest. The City is so far unimpressed by early details of British Energy and its prospects, while the company continues its battle to get its reactors through a safety relicensing process with the Nuclear Installations Inspec-

torate ahead of the sale. Against this background, Mr Lang is expected to start promoting the sale heavily next week. He will spell out plans for a special ring-fenced fund to cover the decommissioning bill for the seven advanced gas-cooled reactors and the Sizewell B station in Suffolk which are being privatised. Mr Lang will argue that a multi-billion pound burden will be lifted from the Exchequer. He will also reject suggestions that the sale could compromise the industry's safety record.

Book discounts push up prices

Les Buckingham

PRICES of books expected to become best-sellers have been increased by a tenth this year to allow retailers to offer discounts without damaging publishing margins. The substantial rises are a response to the collapse of the net book agreement last autumn, opening the way for price competition on books and hitting profit margins in the trade. Bookwatch, the publishing research group, found in its latest survey that publishers have raised the prices of the top 70 hardbacks by an average of 6.5 per cent. The top 10 have seen an even larger increase — between 8 and 10 per cent.

Booktrack, another industry monitoring organisation, illustrates the point. The Phoenix paperback of Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* is priced at £5.99 but the Booktrack survey shows that it is most commonly sold for £1 less. Bantam's *Upstart*, by Catherine Cookson, carries a recommended price of £16.99 but has an average selling price of £14.99. The latest Bookwatch figures suggest that after a disastrous January during which the sales of hardback fiction slumped by 40 per cent on last year's levels, the trade has begun to revive in the run-up to the important Easter period. Despite this pick-up, Bookwatch says overall book sales so far this year are still 3 to 4 per cent down on the corresponding period in 1995.

The paperback market is seeing a similar trend, though here the rises tended to be between 6 and 8 per cent for top-selling titles. Peter Harland, director of Bookwatch, said publishers are phasing out the £9.99 price benchmark for hardbacks. There were indications that price tags between £11 and £12 were also disappearing. There had been a noticeable increase in titles priced at £14.99 to £16.99. The £9.99 paperback also looks set to become a thing of the past, with popular titles increasingly produced at £5.99 and £6.99. The latest figures from



Gas pipeline charges 'must rise'

Simon Beavis
Industrial Editor

BRITISH Gas yesterday called for price controls governing its £18 billion pipelines business, Transco, to be relaxed but made a move to embrace new forms of profit-sharing regulation favoured by Labour. The company was laying out its case for new price caps on Transco to run from April next year to 2002. Both the privatised group and its regulator, Ofgas, believe the price review could end in disagreement and reference to the Monopolies Commission. Philip Rogerson, executive

director of the privatised group, said it would be too costly to continue under the present cap, which keeps price rises to 5 per cent below inflation. He refused to say what would be an acceptable level: "That is a discussion we will look forward to having with Ofgas at the appropriate time." He argued that 40 per cent of costs were accounted for by depreciation and local authority charges, and were beyond Transco's control. That meant the present formula amounted in reality to RPI minus 9 per cent. Directors said they wanted

to stick with inflation-linked price controls but believed this should be balanced by a system to share out excess profits with customers, and a public regulatory contract with Ofgas. Transco's customers are the 35 or so companies wanting to use the national gas pipeline network to supply the industrial and domestic markets. One of the biggest shippers will be British Gas's supply business, which is being hived off into a company called British Gas Energy. Transco is suggesting two profit-sharing options, one giving it cover for failing to meet its profit targets as well

as a formula for splitting excess profits, and another when the removal of cover is compensated for by a more generous "RPI minus" formula. Harry Moulson, head of Transco, also called for a published contract with Ofgas specifying service and product standards, and giving both sides the right to seek arbitration over disputes. "It needs to be public. I don't think it would work unless it was public," he said. Transco was coy on many key financial details backing its submission but said capital expenditure would fall from £886 million now to £716 million by the year 2004.

ABB quizzed about heating pipes after anti-cartel raids

Julie Wolf in Brussels and Mark Milner

A EUROPEAN Commission investigation into allegations that Asea Brown Boveri and other firms operated a cartel in heating pipes is at an advanced stage, commission sources said yesterday. The commission has written to ABB and several other companies setting out information obtained by investigators during raids last June. A company spokesman said ABB had six weeks in which to reply. The business involved in the allegations accounted for less than 1 per cent of group sales, he said. The raids were carried out

in Denmark, Germany, Austria, Sweden and Finland. A commission official said the raids had yielded a considerable amount of data on the companies' operations. "We went fishing and we got a good catch," he said. The commission's investigations are at a delicate stage and should yield results by the summer or autumn, the official added. If the commission finds the companies have operated a cartel, it can fine them up to 10 per cent of turnover. The inquiry involves preinsulated pipes used in district heating. Brussels is also investigating alleged cartels in the newsprint industry and petrochemicals.

Shake-up for exchange

Patrick Donovan
sees caution rule in market switch

PLANS to restructure the Stock Exchange with the introduction of "order driven" trading will initially be restricted to dealings in the market's top 100 shares, the market's regulatory body announced yesterday. News that the exchange intends to phase in changes to the share trading market emerged as a steering committee formally confirmed that it intends to transform the London market with its

biggest shake-up since the 1987 "Big Bang". The plans will see the introduction of order-driven trading, which electronically matches buy and sell orders. The system will not start until spring next year at the earliest, not this August as earlier suggested. London's trading is now quote driven, which involves market makers flagging up prices at which they are prepared to buy or sell shares. The exchange said order-driven trading could eventually be extended to other stocks, and combined with block trading — which would permit confidential

dealing in the largest share orders. The exchange, clearly anxious to win its members' support, said it "acknowledged that further discussions with market users and regulators was necessary to firm up detailed proposals for implementation and regulation of the new system". The exchange, which has suffered huge embarrassment over the recent sacking of its then chief executive, Michael Lawrence, it planned "a series of discussions to debate the regulatory framework around the new structure and the nature of any fiscal benefits in a new environment".

Extradition to US faces ex-Chemical Bank chief

Dan Atkinson

A FORMER vice-president of Chemical Bank appeared before Bow Street magistrates yesterday. Proceedings may end in his extradition to the US on a false accounting charge. Victor Gomez, whose unauthorised trading in the Mexican peso cost Chemical Bank £45.7 million, was sacked in early 1995, weeks before exposure of the much bigger gambles of Barings rogue trader Nick Leeson. Scotland Yard arrested Mr Gomez, aged 35, on Wednesday and Officers of the Extradition Squad took him from his home in Buckinghamshire, to Charing Cross police station. Yesterday he appeared before magistrates, who heard he stood accused of having falsified "an account or record" "dishonestly and with a view to gain for yourself or another or with intent to cause loss for another" between January 1 and January 31 1994, contrary to US law. Chemical — now merged with Chase Manhattan — is thought to have set strict limits on Mr Gomez's peso trading; every purchase of the currency, was supposed to be offset by a similar sale. Mr Gomez is believed to be accused of having short-circuited these restrictions by entering false sales into the computer. The December 1994 peso devaluation is thought to have exposed his activities.

Notebook

WH Smith feels Boots squeeze



Edited by Alex Brummer

THE stock market is starting to salivate at the thought of the strategic review being conducted by Bill Cockburn, WH Smith's new chief executive. As the company does the rounds of the City, all kinds of vistas open, including offloading the Do It All edge-of-town DIY chain jointly owned with Boots, and perhaps disposing of its glamour entertainment retailing businesses, Virgin Megastores and Our Price. These possibilities were enough to lift the group's usually lacklustre share price 3 per cent yesterday. WH Smith cannot, however, go it alone on Do It All. Boots has deep pockets as a result of the surging profitability of its main business, Boots the Chemist. That strength means it has infinite patience and, having helped grind down the costs of Do It All to cope with a moribund housing market, is able to stomach the losses (relatively limited at £14 million a year overall) without much protest from shareholders. Boots's strategic view is that selling Do It All as a loss-maker, requiring some write-down on the balance sheet, makes no sense. The value of edge-of-town shopping sites and franchises is creeping up, as demonstrated by its sale of Childrens World. And while there might be a short-term boost to its share price in closing or offloading Do It All, now is not the time.

crats into the elections in the German Land of Baden-Württemberg on a platform including postponement of the European single currency. Until relatively recently, monetary union was not a question German politicians put to the electorate. But if Mr Spöri does well, then his party's leader at the federal level, Gerhard Schröder, may well decide to make defence of the mark a key issue in German politics.

Indeed, many suggest that Mr Spöri's policy towards monetary union is a kite being flown on the orders of a Gustav Lafontaine, may well decide to make defence of the mark a key issue in German politics. Indeed, many suggest that Mr Spöri's policy towards monetary union is a kite being flown on the orders of a Gustav Lafontaine, may well decide to make defence of the mark a key issue in German politics. Indeed, many suggest that Mr Spöri's policy towards monetary union is a kite being flown on the orders of a Gustav Lafontaine, may well decide to make defence of the mark a key issue in German politics.

TEC giveaway

REGULAR readers of these pages may be surprised to learn that Patrick Doyle, the convicted forger who runs a string of training centres — could soon be given access to more taxpayers' money. His chequered business career aside, it may seem strange that an ongoing Department of Trade and Industry inquiry into various Doyle-linked firms is no bar to Mr Doyle being awarded contracts by the business-led Training and Enterprise Councils. Worries over the entrepreneur and his practices have been seen at least one TEC — South Glamorgan — several links with Mr Doyle. But over the next few days other TECs across the country — some of which have no knowledge of Mr Doyle's background — could well choose to award him contracts. Despite the fact that the money comes from the national training budget, the Department for Education and Employment insists it is not a matter for it. And the DTI is silent. Meanwhile, because it has been kept in the dark, the TEC National Council has simply advised its members to "look closely" at any dealings they may have with Mr Doyle's firm. It is little wonder that the training budget is such a honey-pot when two august government departments have so relaxed an attitude to the distribution of public funds.

Mark fort

LONDON'S foreign exchange dealers may not be paying too much attention just now to the political fortunes of Dieter Spöri. They may yet have to do so. The reason? On Sunday Mr Spöri leads the Social Demo-

IMF is accused of putting at risk comprehensive debt relief plan

Mark Tran in New York

THE International Monetary Fund was accused yesterday of dragging its feet on proposals for comprehensive debt relief for the world's poorest countries. After a meeting of its executive board on Wednesday, the IMF described a plan drawn up by World Bank and Fund staff as "an important step toward resolution of the debt problem" of poor countries. But participants at the meeting described the discussions as much more "negative and questioning" than the bank's board meeting the previous week. Germany, France and Japan, in particular, expressed opposition to the staff plan more forcefully than in bank discussions.

At issue is the idea of a trust fund, or funds, which would be used to prepay or service a portion of debt obligations of eligible countries, most of them from Africa. The effort, unveiled last year by James Wolfensohn, the World Bank director, marks the first attempt to craft a comprehensive approach to easing the debt burden on the world's poorest countries. The fund would receive contributions from bilateral donors and multilateral institutions such as the bank and possibly the IMF. The IMF is reluctant to stump up money by selling some of its gold stocks, preferring to use sales to replenish its soft-loans scheme. Proponents of sizeable debt relief fear that the IMF's foot-dragging will scupper efforts to achieve a comprehensive approach.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 1.92	France 7.50	Italy 2.343	Singapore 2.11
Austria 15.34	Germany 2.20	Malta 0.5425	South Africa 5.94
Belgium 48.05	Greece 362.00	Netherlands 2.48	Spain 184.00
Canada 2.04	Hong Kong 11.58	New Zealand 2.1750	Sweden 10.94
Cyprus 0.6975	India 54.14	Norway 8.60	Switzerland 1.77
Denmark 8.52	Ireland 0.9500	Portugal 228.00	Turkey 69.900
Finland 8.98	Israel 4.75	Saudi Arabia 5.75	USA 1.5000

Supplied by NatWest Bank (including Indian rupee and Israeli sheqel)

Thames hit for £95m on sale of non-core businesses but rules out takeover trail ● Severn Trent ponders counterbid for South West

Water companies embark on fresh buy and sell round

Nicholas Barnister
Technology Editor

THE TROUBLED water sector was in fresh turmoil yesterday as Thames Water announced it was disposing of the bulk of its non-core businesses at a cost of £95 million, and Severn Trent disclosed plans to counterbid for South West Water.

Thames is also parting company with Mike Hoffmann, the £250,000 a year chief executive who has directed the costly diversification programme since joining the company in 1989.

The group said it intended to concentrate on its core water and sewage business and the completion of its long-term build, operate and transfer contracts in Turkey, Thailand, China, Malaysia, Puerto Rico and Australia.

It is pulling out of stand-alone design and construction operations, putting its Utag business in Germany and its FWT subsidiary in the UK up for sale, and closing its Waste Solutions offshoot in the US.

Thames has sold five other companies making water-related plant or equipment for the industrial market, and is on the point of selling a sixth. A small products company in the US has already been closed.

Thames, which has spent £130 million on diversification since privatisation in 1989, said the businesses being closed or sold lost £26 million in 1995-96 and accounted for about 60 per cent of its non-core activities.

The group acquired Utag in 1982 expecting business to boom after German re-unifi-

cation but the expected massive upgrading of East Germany's water infrastructure failed to materialise and the company never made a profit under Thames ownership.

Sir Robert Clarke, who is stepping up from non-executive to executive chairman, said Thames would not be seeking new overseas contracts for the time being. He added: "We have to prove to the world at large and our shareholders that we can make the best of what we have got."

He said Thames was not interested in bidding either for other water companies or electricity companies. "We would find some difficulty taking over a company not adjacent to us" interested in bidding either for other water companies or electricity companies. "We would find some difficulty taking over a company not adjacent to us because it would be more difficult to get the synergies we would expect."

The group had opted to work closely with London Electricity in areas where they do things together, rather than make a bid. He added that the group's best defence against takeover was "to run the business as efficiently as possible."

Sir Robert said Mr Hoffmann, who was not being replaced, would be entitled to compensation for loss of office but negotiations had yet to start.

Mr Hoffmann was on a two-year rolling contract with a basic salary of £250,000. He owns about 68,000 Thames shares and has share options currently showing a paper profit of about £170,000.

Unlike Thames, Severn Trent, the Midlands water and sewage group, is hoping to expand through takeover. It said yesterday it would seek the necessary regulatory approval to make a bid for South West Water, already targeted by its neighbour Wessex Water.

Severn Trent, like Wessex, believes that it can manage SWW's operations more efficiently and that it will be able to deliver price cuts and better customer service.

The Birmingham-based group said it would decide whether to make a formal bid only after the move had been approved by Ian Lang, the Trade and Industry Secretary, and after agreement in principle of acceptable conditions with Ian Byatt, the director general of Ofwat.

It said it had identified a number of areas which provide the potential for increased efficiency, including overhead and operating costs, capital expenditure and more efficient financing.

Severn Trent, unlike Wessex, has set no minimum bid price, only saying that it would not overpay. Wessex has promised to offer at least £550 million.

The Midlands group has followed Wessex in promising price cuts should it make a successful bid. Mr Byatt has insisted on "prorata" in the past to compensate for the reduction in the number of water companies available for comparison.



Suitable place for treatment... Thames' £40m new Walton plant PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID HANSELL

Customers beg to share load

UK's biggest bills posted to 1.5m in South-west, writes Geoffrey Gibbs

PAUL Petrides will shed few tears if South West Water succumbs to Wessex Water or Severn Trent, particularly if the moves result in the promised reduction in charges and improvements in services.

SWW's combined water and sewage bills are the highest in the country, yet the region's 1.5 million consumers give frequent voice to complaints about poor water quality, shortages and management shortcomings.

Mr Petrides' run-ins with the utility have been over sewage discharges into the sea off his local beach at Croyde in north Devon, discoloured water coming from his tap and what he feels was an unsatisfactory complaints service when he had problems with his water bill.

To cap it all, he and 85,000 other consumers in north Devon this month were banned from using hosepipes. SWW, which had just lifted hosepipe and sprinkler bans covering the whole of Cornwall and large parts of south and west Devon, imposed the new restrictions because Roadford — one of its three strategic reservoirs — was only 35 per cent full.

The depleted state of Roadford, has become something of a local cause celebre, regarded as symptomatic of management weakness at SWW's Exeter headquarters.

A report by the National Rivers Authority on last summer's drought disclosed that five billion litres of water — 15 per cent of Roadford's capacity — were released into the sea at a time when thousands of customers in the region were prohibited from watering their gardens.

When news of the NRA's findings broke, SWW chairman Keith Court halted the computerised bill run after 40,000 of the 700,000 invoices had been printed to give the company time to explain the water loss before the arrival of bills averaging £300.

"When it was opened a few years ago we were told the Roadford was the answer to all our problems," says Mr Petrides. "Now we are told it's only a third full, it's a bit puzzling. Obviously the system is not working as it was intended to. We were told it was our insurance policy against drought."

SWW owes its unwanted position as the country's highest charger to a low customer base and a location in which huge amounts are having to be invested to improve bathing water quality and replace hundreds of miles of old mains. Investment in mains and sewage treatment improvements, including the Clean Sweep coastal sewage treatment programme, has amounted to £1 billion since 1990. A further £500 million has been earmarked for the next five years.

Company spokesmen frequently point out that the cost of cleaning up 30 per cent of the nation's bathing beaches is being borne by just 3 per cent of the population.

The argument cut no ice with the Monopolies Commission when SWW sought to challenge price caps imposed by Ofwat, the industry regulator. Price increases have been restricted to half a per cent above RPI for 1996-97, to 1 per cent above for the following three years and to the level of inflation in each of the following five years.

"If a takeover spreads the cost over a larger number of people — whether they live in Wessex or in the Severn Trent area — it's got to be a help," said Mr Petrides.

Water to start season

Guinness's profit figures live down to expectations

Outlook
Pauline Springett

DRINKS company Guinness had done its utmost to ensure that its 1995 company did not cause seismic waves. The market was primed to expect flat sales and profits figures, thanks to last January's warning of extra restructuring charges and declining profits in Japan.

It was not disappointed. Stripping out the £84 million restructuring charge, underlying profits rose by a mere 3 per cent to £940 million. Guinness can take comfort from not being alone among the large drinks companies in having had an uninspiring year. Its main competitors, such as Grand Metropolitan, Allied Domecq and Seagram, are in

the same boat. The problem is that the developed world's alcoholic drinks market is in a slump. In the 1980s, price rises were fairly easily disguised by inflation, and were swallowed accordingly.

As the Guinness chairman, Tony Greener, acknowledged, today there is a "cold, dry environment". Low inflation has made price rises harder to push through.

Added to that, real volume increases from the markets of the developing world still have a "jam tomorrow" air about them. Some of these countries, especially in Latin America, have seen their economies knocked sideways by currency upsets. Japan, which had started to have an effect on Guinness's bottom line, is in economic decline.

Then there is the way many countries with developing markets still have populations too poor to spend much on expensive Western drinks.

Guinness's spirits division, United Distillers, accounts for 85 per cent of profits. It has been reorganised into six divisions and produced profits of £673 million, 3 per cent down on 1994. Apart from Japan, there was a poor performance in the US due to a difficult climate for the sale of mid-

priced spirits, plus disruption caused by a disposal. There was a continued strong performance from Guinness's best known whisky brand, Johnnie Walker, which increased its sales volume by 11 per cent, with more than £1 million cases sold worldwide.

The brewing division was unexciting but did at least produce a 7 per cent rise in worldwide profits at £270 mil-

lion. Mr Greener said that over 1 million pints of draught Guinness were now drunk every day in Britain.

Mr Greener pulled no punches about the continued difficulties facing Guinness. "We do not expect that trading conditions will improve significantly in 1996," he said.

Nevertheless, the company was determined to try to push through price increases in spirits this year and had already started to do so.

Last year Guinness did not raise spirits prices in Britain or the US. This year it wants to increase UK prices by up to 4 per cent and in American markets by up to 3 per cent. Rises of 3 to 6 per cent are planned for Latin America, the same

as last year. In continental Europe there will be some price rises. Prices in Japan will remain flat. If the price rises stick, Guinness could make a tidy £80 million extra profit.

Whatever the outcome of the price rise attempts, there is no disguising the way in which the company needs to achieve real sales growth.

One way of achieving this might be to make a purchase. Mr Greener said the company would consider any good acquisition opportunities if they arose. But he said prospects were limited and that Guinness's policy was to grow organically. He added that recent speculation about consolidation in the industry had been overdone.

Guinness spent £500 million on marketing its spirits and beer last year and Mr Greener promised more spending in 1996. Whether the hard sell will have much effect on volume is hard to say. A cynic might suggest that alcoholic drinks have become similar to soap powder, with producers forced to spend huge sums on marketing merely to maintain market share.

Guinness	
Share price	£3.37m
Share price	▲ 46p
Market cap	21,500
Interest cover	8.7
YEAR	
Revenue	4,801m
Pre-tax profit	£76m
Earnings share	22.5p
Dividend/share	14.9p
Group trading profit	
1995	217
1994	196
1993	158
1992	106

News in brief

Planemaker confirms 1,000 jobs may go

SHORTS, the Belfast planemaker, yesterday confirmed that it may shed 1,000 jobs after the collapse of one of its main customers, Fokker. Shorts has produced wings for the Dutch company for 30 years. Ken Brundie, vice-president of aerospace operations, said the east Belfast company feared some 300 workers would have to be made compulsorily redundant.

Another 640 people will go as their short-term contracts expire. Nearly 250 workers have volunteered for early retirement or redundancy. Mr Brundie said it was hoped to retrain 300 workers for jobs in the company and discussions continued with government agencies over funding. — David Sharrock

Reliant bidders in dispute

AN eleven-hour dispute between joint bidders yesterday left the future of three-wheel car manufacturer Reliant in doubt, after a meeting of creditors claiming they are owed more than £1.5 million was adjourned until April 2. Reliant laid off 100 workers from its plant at Tamworth, Staffordshire, before Christmas.

Production continued with 12 workers after chief executive Peter Hall put the company into administration.

Creditors said contracts were about to be signed to divide the fibreglass bodied car's rights and assets at home and abroad when the dispute emerged. A third bid came from Mr Hall and private financiers who are believed to have sought to keep the company in British hands. — PA

Yellow Pages prices attacked

BRITISH Telecom has been told to cut the charges of its Yellow Pages division after the Monopolies Commission ruled that the group was abusing its effective monopoly of classified directory advertising services. The commission said that BT, through Yellow Pages, had exploited its 84 per cent share of the market by charging high prices to advertisers against the public interest.

John Taylor, competition and consumer affairs minister, backed the commission's recommendation that Yellow Pages cut its charges by 3 per cent a year in real terms for at least three years. It has also been prohibited from covering any area with more than one classified directory. — Nicholas Barnister

Forsyth jury still out

JURORS in the Old Bailey trial of former Asil Nadir aide Elizabeth Forsyth will resume their deliberations today, after the judge yesterday told them a majority verdict would be acceptable. Mr Justice Tucker gave the direction after the jury had sat for eight hours without reaching a decision.

Mrs Forsyth, aged 38, from Great Dunmow, Essex, denies two charges of handling £250,050 knowing or believing it to have been stolen. — Dan Ackroyd

CU chief earnings rose 26pc

COMMERCIAL Union's chief executive, John Carter, was given a 26 per cent increase in his remuneration package last year, taking his income to £487,557. In addition Mr Carter received a pension contribution of £29,375, compared with £26,500 the year before.

Another director, Peter Ward, saw his remuneration rise from £263,532 to £313,082, while Tony Wyand earned a total of £386,655 against £316,846 the year before.

The insurance group, which has decided to introduce Greenbury-style reporting for executive remuneration a year ahead of deadline, said that the total paid to executives, including pension contributions and performance bonuses, rose by 47.5 per cent to £1.58 million. The company's profits for last year were 32 per cent higher at £594 million. — Lisa Buckingham

Petrol stations warning

FROST Group, Britain's biggest independent petrol retailer, yesterday warned that several thousand independent petrol stations could close this year as a result of the price war. James Frost, the chairman, said the outlook for the rest of 1996 looked tough and he expected a number of suppliers to pull out of the UK.

The group unveiled a 36 per cent improvement in full year pre-tax profits, to £15.1 million, although this does not cover the period since the start of the price war. Frost shares were down 2p at 118p. — Ian King

Laura Ashley appointment

JOHN THORNTON, a London-based partner of Wall Street banking group Goldman Sachs, was yesterday named as the new non-executive chairman of fashion group Laura Ashley. He is due to take up the appointment on May 21 when the present chairman, Liberal Democrat peer Lord Hooson, retires. Mr Thornton recently joined the board of the Ford Motor Company. — Ian King

National Provident Institution

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 160th Annual General Meeting of members of National Provident Institution will be held at the City Conference Centre, 76 Mark Lane, London EC3, on Wednesday, 17 April 1996, at 12.00 noon, for the transaction of the following ordinary business:

- * To receive and adopt the Accounts and Report of the Directors for the year ended 31 December 1995;
- * To reappoint as a Director, Mr A C Barker.
- * To reappoint as a Director, Mr J D Carter.
- * To reappoint as a Director, Baroness Hogg.
- * To reappoint as a Director, Mr L J Martin.
- * To reappoint as a Director, Mr D J M Roberts.
- * To reappoint as a Director, Mr J J H Wormell.

(All of the above Directors are members of the Remuneration Committee)

- * To reappoint Coopers & Lybrand as Auditors and to authorise the Directors to determine their remuneration.
- * To increase the upper limit of each Non-Executive Director's basic fee to £25,000 per annum, and subject to this limit, to authorise the Directors to determine the rate of the basic fee.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD: Steven O'Brien, Company Secretary.
Principal Office: National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN11 2UE.

NOTE: A member entitled to attend and vote at the general meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and, on a poll, to vote instead of him or her. A proxy need not be a member of NPI. Proxy forms are available on request from the Company Secretary at the Principal Office. Completed proxy forms must be deposited at the Principal Office not later than 12 noon on 15 April 1996.

PROVIDING PENSIONS SINCE 1853

If you would like a copy of NPI's Report and Accounts 1995, write to John Fisher, NPI, GVO2C, National Provident House, 55 Calverley Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN11 2UE

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Fraudster free to seek contract

Sarah Whitehouse

THE Department for Education and Employment has refused to inform the bodies handing out millions of pounds in government training cash that one of the bidders for contracts — Patrick Doyle — is a convicted fraudster whose collapsed training firm, AST, is under investigation by the Department of Trade and Industry.

The Training and Enterprise Councils will be awarding the 1996/97 contracts in the next few days. They have been denied the information about Mr Doyle and his businesses which would be crucial in making informed decision about contracts.

The DEE insists that the contracts are not a matter for the department, even though public money is involved.

A spokesman for one training council, LawTec, based in Preston, said yesterday that he had no knowledge of Mr Doyle's background or of the DTI investigation into the AST group, which collapsed last March. He said that he would be making immediate inquiries with LawTec's local government office — which provides the council's funding.

He added that no decision has yet been taken about whether to renew a contract with Mr Doyle's new training enterprise, Firlands.

The TEC National Council said it had been unable to advise its members about the situation because it has been given no firm information by the DTIE or the DTI.

"It would be a lot easier if the DTI would say what is going on," a spokesman said.

A spokeswoman for the DEE said that no advice has been given to the TECs about Mr Doyle and his businesses, adding: "An investigation does not mean anything will or has been found."

The DTI refuses to say whether an inquiry is under way. Investigations carried out under section 447 of the Companies Act are not usually publicised by the department. A DTI spokesman said yesterday: "We don't discuss our relationship with other regulators."

He also declined to say whether the DTI had any policy on awarding publicly-funded contracts to firms that are under investigation.

Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, last night tabled a number of parliamentary questions to the Education Secretary, Gillian Shepherd, asking why her department failed to take account of the DTI investigation when advising TECs about contracts.

Other TECs contacted by the Guardian yesterday refused to discuss the awarding of contracts until formal announcements are made next week. A spokesman for one council said the TEC was aware that "something was going on last year" in respect of Mr Doyle's businesses but had no details.

RACING: THE OPENING OF THE FLAT

Doncaster plan to kick start the season

Switch to April would avoid Cheltenham and Aintree Festivals

Chris Hawkins

THE turf flat season got off to its usual low-key start in miserable conditions at Doncaster yesterday and did much to support the argument that it would make a greater impact if launched after the Grand National in April...

from Doncaster and until we have 1 am not prepared to speculate on how we might react. Punters took a pasting at the Cheltenham Festival last week with only one favourite obliging in 20 races and the story was much the same yesterday as a succession of big priced winners went in...



Muddy marvel... Michael Hills (right) drives home First Island to win yesterday's Stones Bitter Doncaster Mile

PHOTOGRAPH MICHAEL STEELE

Stroud, owner Sheikh Mohammed's racing manager, said: "The old split problem has returned and the extent of the injury is such that he will be unable to make the race."

For half an hour yesterday, Royston French was head of the jockeys' table after scoring on the 33-1 chance Haya Ya Kefash in the opening Rye

Channel Handicap. This was the 30-year-old apprentice's first winner, but he has had only six rides. He is intended to race Constant after being top apprentice at the Newmarket racing school.

Jack Berry has cut back on his number of two-year-olds this season and has only 47, compared to 90 or so in previous seasons. But such is his reputation that he saddled the favourite, as usual, for the first juvenile event, the Constant Security Brocklesley Stakes.

On the evidence of the Mitsubishi Handicap, where Little Noggin (drawn 3) beat Lady Caroline Lamb (9), middle to low numbers may have an advantage in tomorrow's William Hill Lincoln. The sponsors make Sharp Prospect 6-1 favourite, from 7s, and report support for Delta Soleil, from 12-1 to 8-1.

Noyan tuned up for Cup bid

Ron Cox

LAST week's Cheltenham Festival can point the way to solving the first of three competitive handicaps at Doncaster today when Noyan makes a quick reappearance in the Cystic Fibrosis Research Cup. A highly creditable ninth of 18 finished behind Trainglot in the Coral Cup Hurdle. Noyan is fancied to make the most of his featherweight over this two and a quarter miles. This is the first time Noyan has had a proper test of stamina on the flat, which is surprising since he stays so well over hurdles. Of today's rivals, Meant To Be and Blaze Away have also been in good form over hurdles recently but the ground has gone against the latter and Meant To Be will have her work cut out trying to give 30lb to Noyan (3.05). Provided he handles the rain-soaked going, Noyan (3.40) can go close in the William Hill Spring Mile on his first outing for Reg Akehurst. His form tailed off last season, when he was with Dick Hern, but Noyan has been showing signs of a revival for his new trainer, who won this race with Sharp Prospect 12 months ago. Three Hills (2.05), third to the highly-rated pair Noyan and Blaze Away in the Newmarket last autumn, has the form to win the P & J Foods Maiden Stakes, a good which I can pass on a good way for Roger Charlton's newcomer Summer Spill.

Doncaster with form for the televised events

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 1.30 Mile Race, 2.05 Three Miles, 2.30 Donkey Chase.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 1.30 CYTIC FIBROSIS RESEARCH CUP HANDICAP STAKES 270 Yds of 25.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 2.05 P & J FOODS MAIDEN STAKES 270 Yds of 25.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 2.35 GLOBAL SPORTS RESEARCH CUP HANDICAP 270 Yds of 25.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 3.05 CYTIC FIBROSIS RESEARCH CUP HANDICAP 270 Yds of 25.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 3.40 CYTIC FIBROSIS RESEARCH CUP HANDICAP 270 Yds of 25.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 4.10 HOLLOWAY CONSTRUCTION GROUP HANDICAP 270 Yds of 25.00.

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Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 4.45 THURSDAY STANDARD OPEN IN FLAT RACE (270 Yds) of 11.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 5.15 THURSDAY STANDARD OPEN IN FLAT RACE (270 Yds) of 11.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 5.20 FAMOUS GROSSUP NOVICE HURDLE (270 Yds) of 11.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 2.40 WILLIAM HILL SPRING MILE HANDICAP 1m of 25.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 2.40 CHAFFINCH NOVICE CHASE 2m of 11.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 2.40 CHAFFINCH NOVICE CHASE 2m of 11.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 3.10 WINDMILL HURDLE 2m of 11.00.

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 3.45 CRYSTAL HURDLE 2m of 11.00.

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Hereford National Hunt card

Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 2.10 Steel Gate, 2.40 Royal Chase.

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Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 2.40 CHAFFINCH NOVICE CHASE 2m of 11.00.

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Table with 2 columns: Race Name, Time. Includes 3.45 HARRY WEAVER, 4.10 THREE PHOENIXES.

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RACELINE 0891 1684. DONCASTER NEWBURY KELSO HEREFORD. Includes race results and betting information.

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Soccer

Defiant Chase in no mood to quit

John Duncan sees Norwich's unpopular chairman stand up to angry shareholders

THE question was not on the agenda of Norwich City's packed and angry annual general meeting yesterday, but it was one which almost all the 200 or so shareholders packed into the Executive Suite at Carrow Road were asking. How long can their chairman Robert Chase go on?

In football terms Chase is more lion than canary, more Millwall than Norwich. No one likes him but he does not appear to care. A vote on a Chase-nominated director was hopelessly lost on a show of hands; a card vote produced 71 per cent in favour, "a majority of 47,000 votes," said Chase with a glee. He holds 48,000 shares.

Chairman now... Chase in a field of his own ROSE HOWARTH

"I don't know anything about accounts. Mr Chase," said Brown, a gentle man driven to finger-pointing, "but the thing is, Mr Chase, you know nothing about football." But if one could patent Chase's personality, Teflon would be out of business in a fortnight.

Chase has made good profits on all those who have gone, but, say the shareholders, that is not the point. "What other club sells a centre-half and a centre-forward and buys a flour mill? We are the laughing stock of the league," complained one.

Chase has sold since 1996:

Table listing player transfers from Norwich City since 1996, including names like Steve Bruce, Chris Woods, and transfer fees.



Thunder on the horizon... Leeds want Tony Yeboah to unleash one of his spectacular strikes against Aston Villa at Wembley

Hot-shot poacher from Kumasi

Cynthia Bateman on Tony Yeboah's desire to fulfil a childhood dream by firing Leeds' ambitions in Sunday's Coca-Cola Cup final

WHEN Alex Ferguson eventually found the words to express his admiration for Eric Cantona's breathtaking goal which won the game for Manchester United against Arsenal on Wednesday night, he said: "It was like one of Yeboah's."

start in Ghana," he said. "The important thing is to score goals." Doing that has already earned him cult status at Elland Road.

Yet Leeds might not have had him at all. At one time he was fifth on Wilkinson's list as he searched for a big-name striker from Europe, although that was largely because Eintracht were not prepared to entertain inquiries.

Romania's coach forces admission of corruption

Chris Stephens in Bucharest

ROMANIA'S football association admitted yesterday that corruption and match fixing is rife in the national league. It is an admission that the national team coach Anghel Iordanescu threatened to resign over the issue.

The association's chairman Mircea Sandu yesterday said Iordanescu had been right. He told a highly charged press conference: "Of course there are rigged matches in the championship, but to have evidence is not so simple. You have to discover them. It is our shame that the problem has not been analysed."

Results

Soccer: ASIAN OLYMPIC QUALIFIERS: Group B: South Korea 3, China 0, Saudi Arabia 4, Kazakhstan 0.

Sport in brief

Broadcasting: Alan Weeks, a BBC commentator since 1951, is hanging up his microphone after completing his commentary on the world figure skating championships in Canada which end on Sunday.

Squash

Shoppers see Walker stroll to his greatest victory: For a while, though, it seemed Walker might be overwhelmed. He was a game down and 5-1 down in the second against an opponent he had only ever beaten once before on the circuit before he began to make progress.

Cricket

ONE-DAY MATCHES: Melbourne World XI 210-9 (50 overs), O. Jones 103, Australia 215-8 (50 overs), M. Taylor 78, Australia.

Flitcroft set to join Blackburn and fill midfield gap left by Batty

BLACKBURN Rovers are set to sign the Manchester City midfielder Gary Flitcroft for £2.2 million today subject to a medical.

SFA looks into tunnel fracas

THE Scottish FA has set up an inquiry into the fracas in the tunnel at the end of the match between the First Division promotion rivals Morton and Dunfermline at Cappielow Park on Tuesday.

Baseball

MLB: Toronto 107, Charlotte 82, Atlanta 28, Vancouver 82, Boston 90, Orlando 112, Miami 102, Detroit 82, Washington 101, St. Antonio 112, NY 102, Indiana 92, Milwaukee 27, Sacramento 25, Utah 107, Philadelphia 84, LA Clippers 110, Minnesota 88.

Baseball

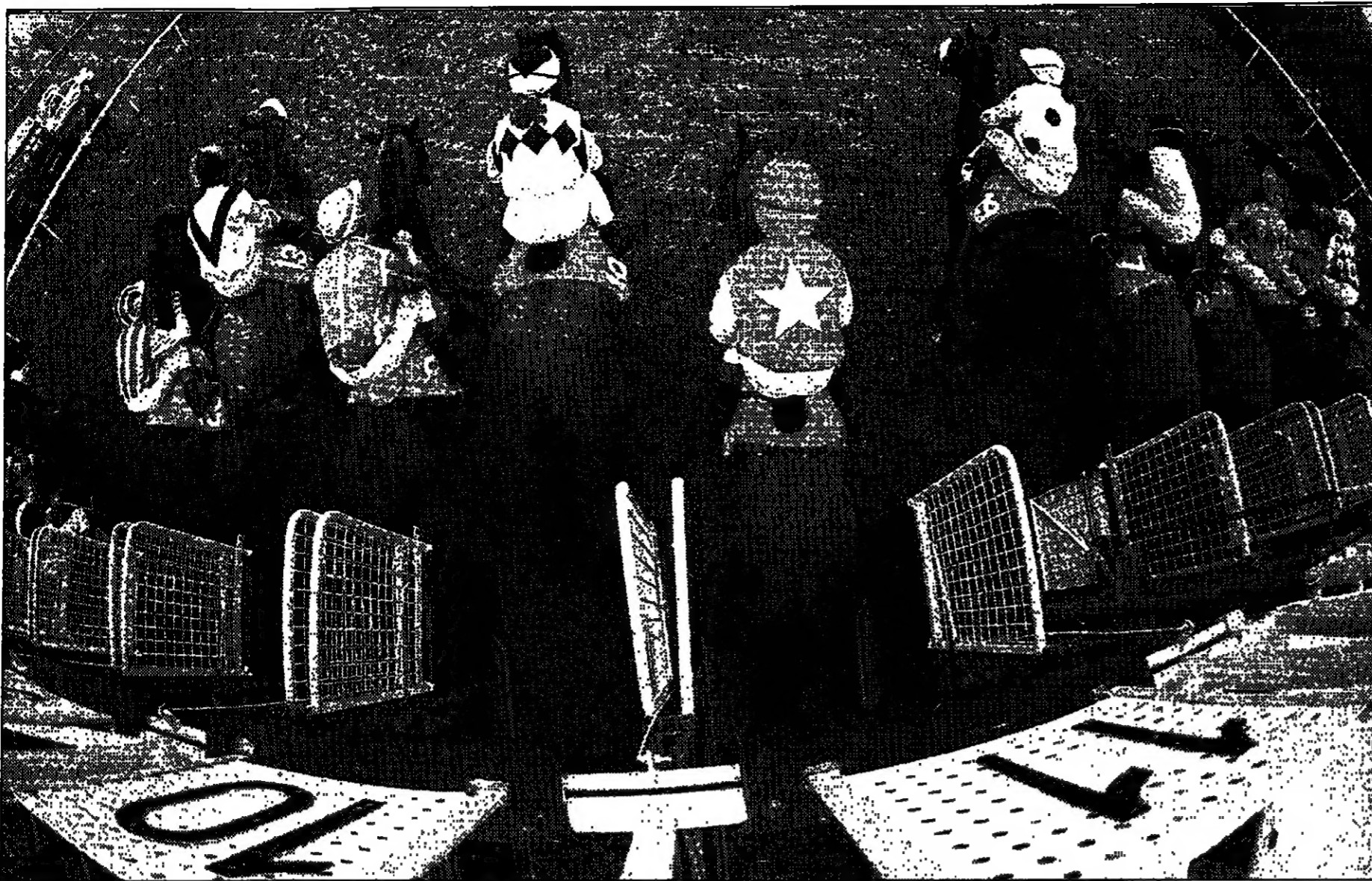
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Smith stokes the Gloucester furnace, page 15

Norwich pressure mounts on Chase, page 14
Australian RL sues Lindsay, page 15

SportsGuardian

OUTSIDER GETS FLAT SEASON OFF TO A SURPRISE START



They're off... runners clear the stalls in the opening race of the Flat season at Doncaster yesterday, won by Haya Ya Kefalah, far left in the stripes, at 33-1. There were 20-1 and 16-1 winners to come. Doncaster are to canvass for the three-day meeting to be transferred to April to breathe fresh life into the fixture. Chris Hawkins, page 13 PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEELE

Still kicking off with a rush at Kingsholm



Frank Keating

GLOUCESTER'S famous Cherry and Whites from Kingsholm are zapped up and on edge for tomorrow's daunting semi-final at Bath. So is Gloucester's famous Pink.

The Gloucester Citizen's Saturday evening Pink Un remains unique among England's surviving and glorious team of Saturday "Sports Finals", in that soccer has to scrap for space on its inside pages and the broad and breathless Page One splash is invariably devoted to the afternoon deeds of Gloucester RFC.

Another refreshing difference is that the Citizen has a woman as rugby correspondent, and a good one too.

There will be even more jostling for space tomorrow, with another reporter following the city's junior side Old Centralians in a semi-final of the Pilkington Shield at Wakefield. With Gloucester's soccer team, heezing away at Atherstone, taking up the back of the 32-page, the fat cats of Premiership soccer get very thin inside rations.

NOTHING has changed. In my City-rugby, sir" — "Downpage front," sir would scream. Later, "What page Arsenal v Man United, sir?" — "Two pars, page 13," the sports editor would mutter dismissively. The rugged city knew its priorities.

There used to be more of them. The Northampton Chronicle & Echo abandoned its Saturday Pink two years ago — it is now a Monday evening free tabloid supplement, which is not the same thing at all. There, in its heyday, the rugby Saints would quite regularly elbow soccer's Cobblers out of the page one splash.

Gloucester's Pink tomorrow will be "off the stone" by 5.40, and within the hour on the streets and being vroomed all around in vans. By seven o'clock, at the circulation's extremities, say Cinderford to the west, Stroud to the east, you can be enjoying a pub pint while you read all about it. With the headlines, as ever, doing their best to reflect the personalised local gloss.

When Gloucester were so crushingly beaten, 48-8 by Bath, in the 1990 Pilkington final, the Pink's headlining writer penned a scathing "Cherry and Whites in 54-point Thriller".

I wonder how long they have left, these colourful little leftovers of old England's 20th century culture. There are healthy enough Pinks and Greens and Buff Uns dotted all round the north still, mercifully. Rest assured, some suit is looking to kill them all, for they reek of a different homelier age than the future's vacuous Internet idiosyncrasy.

Saturday's Pink was so deliciously evoked in that classic on Barnsley by Alistair and Ward, when "the Barnsley streets became a sea of Green Uns as the fanatics read the reports and occasionally in a dance-hall set there could be seen reading the Green Un behind his partner's back as they waited".

SOON no team will kick off with a rush again. It was Barnsley where sports editor on the Sheffield Green Un had the nerve to tell the long-time old Saturday stringer at Oakwell that he'd be fired unless he put some descriptive variations in his reports and cut out his tiresome permanent first line, "The Reds kicked off with a rush..."

So, next week, the old boy picked up his phone after five minutes' play and, seemingly obeying the editor's dictate, he introduced, "Oakwell glistened after the rains and a sharply textured and almost translucent winter's sunlight reminiscent of Brueghel's vivid brushwork helped warm the easterly zephyrs which lanced across the ground, and while it bent low the scurrying Lowry-type latecomers to the match, it stirred into picturesque wisps the smoke from the surrounding chimneys as the white-kneed official in black shrilly set things in motion with a sharp whistle-blast and the Reds kicked off with a rush..."

Graveney plays Botham card

David Foot sees the controversial former Test captain enter the reckoning as election battle heats up for control of English cricket

DAVID Graveney, challenging Ray Illingworth to become England's chairman of selectors, last night produced Ian Botham as his election trump card. He said there could be a crucial "dressing-room role" for the former Test captain.

If the 43-year-old Graveney wins this week's postal ballot and deposes Illingworth, he wants to surround himself

with a young, eager circle of aides, a larger management team and more back-up.

Botham played under him at Durham, and Graveney said: "He's such a natural motivator; he inspires and gets on well with the players. We should take advantage of this."

Intense lobbying — "more like that of a General Election," as one county secretary wryly observed — is accom-

panying the build-up to the vote. The counties are thought to be split down the middle; some unable to make up their minds whether the strong-minded, often contentious Illingworth should be stripped of much of his power.

He has been the principal Test selector over the past two years and also team manager for the past 12 months. In that time England have won five and lost seven of their 22 Tests. Against that, they have remained unbeaten in the last three home Test series.

Backed by his native Yorkshire, Illingworth is also counting on the last-minute

support of several "floating" voters. The argument is that there should be the minimum of change before the recommendations from David Acfield's commissioned working party are made known during the late summer.

One county, wishing — like most of them — not to be identified, said last night: "There seems to be a case, whatever our wretched record against South Africa and then in the World Cup, to preserve the status quo."

Graveney's advocates, headed by Warwickshire, say that he has relative youth and enthusiasm on his side, and as a player only recently retired he has more affinity with the current game than Illingworth.

It had become clear, before yesterday's confirmation from Lord's, that there would be no third candidate. The

former Sussex captain John Barclay, 42, the choice of one or two counties, declined to stand. But Graveney would want to involve him — possibly, it seems, as team manager at home and tour manager abroad.

With manifesto-like fervour, Graveney said: "I wouldn't intend doing the same job as Ily. That's an important point to make. I see the chairman's role as an overseeing one, making sure the structure operates properly, providing continuity in selection and administration."

"We should take note of the way South Africa and Australia do things, while creating our own system. We should start planning now for the 1997 Ashes series."

He takes pains to point out that he has worked happily with Illingworth and there have been no differences of

opinion. But they have different views on a number of points.

A permanent coach, in the shape of John Emburey — despite possible complications over his four-year contract with Northamptonshire — or David Lloyd, is high on the agenda. Mike Gatting is among other respected and experienced players being increasingly mentioned for involvement in the new structure.

Graveney also believes his plans would take pressure off the captain — and he wants Mike Atherton to continue in that job for some time while gaining further experience, expertise and maturity.

That leaves one question: How soon? Warwickshire want that appointment now. The result of the ballot, with the MCC and Minor Counties each having a single vote, will be announced on Tuesday.

England boost for Bowyer

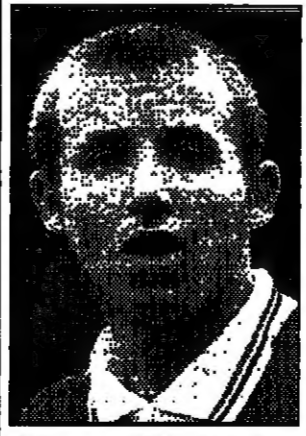
LEE BOWYER'S excellent form for Charlton was recognised by Terry Venables yesterday when he called up the gifted teenage midfielder for training with the England squad next week. The invitation completed the rehabilitation of Bowyer's career, which was in danger of an early end a year ago when he tested positive for marijuana.

This season Bowyer, 19, has been a driving force in Charlton's promotion campaign and he has attracted the interest of several Premiership clubs, including Arsenal and Liverpool.

A playmaker with energy, pace and vision, his accurate passing and ability to strike from deep — he has scored 14 goals this season — have marked him out as an international of the future, something borne out by his breaking into the England Under-21 team at 18.

Bowyer will be joined in the

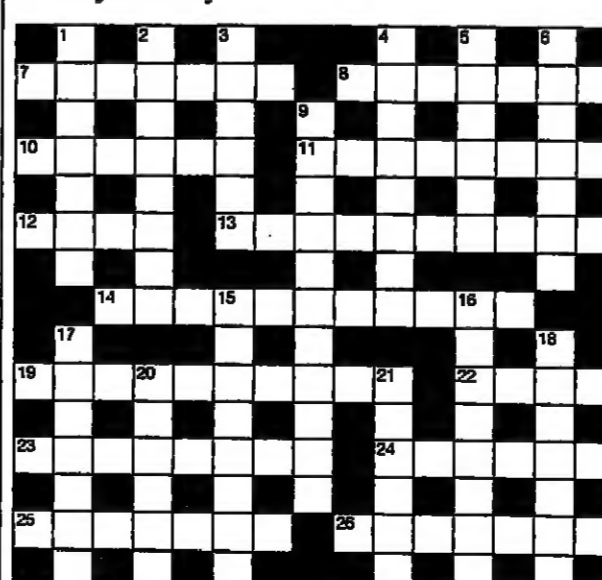
England camp by two 18-year-olds, Ipswich Town's oft 2in goalkeeper Richard Wright, an England youth international, and the Tranmere Rovers striker Ian Moore, who has scored 10 goals this season.



Bowyer... rising talent

Guardian Crossword No 20,607

Set by Fawley

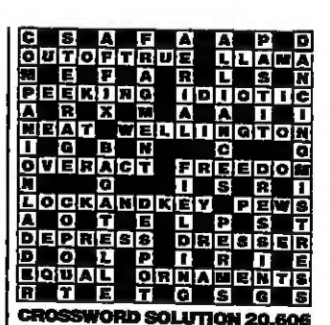


Across

- 7 Small ripple of greeting permitted? (7)
- 8 Monarch that is given commoner's name? (7)
- 10 Barrier confronts SF movie — where to get the cash? (6)
- 11 Get fortified with meat? Belt may need adjusting! (6)
- 12 Building extension for some squadrons? (4)
- 13 Desire to break flickering screen arising again? (10)
- 14 Cheese from Sweden, really runny? That's not right! (11)
- 15 Gun displayed in a cathedral (10)
- 22 He could take part in pirates' meeting (4)
- 23 Artist provided as a referee, perhaps (8)
- 24 Gold pervades men's spirit (6)
- 25 Most circumspect in conflict with site for development? (7)

Down

- 1 A vehicle's overturned — call's cut short — in a stew? (7)
- 2 Into arriass on story about turnover of, say, provocative dress? (8)
- 3 Divine drink could induce trance (6)
- 4 Unfeeling oriental socialist given digital specifications (8)
- 5 Get annoyed with ambodiment of slinginess? (6)
- 6 Club offers tip for writer to acquire speed? (7)
- 9 Periodical reports posted about this puzzle? (11)
- 15 Rarely misses an order (pinned up in notices) for type of fruit (8)
- 16 Almost awoken desire, at first positively glowing (8)



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 20,606

- 17 Frenchman designed a shirt to suit pagan god (7)
- 18 Ability to cope with main variations? (3,4)
- 20 Conspirator rejects posh flavoured drink (6)
- 21 Concerned with a young woman being lax? (6)

Solution tomorrow

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"The music reflects a lifestyle, an attitude; it was all about being hip to whatever was going down at a particular moment. It's ultimately about being easy with yourself as a black person."

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